Flowers of the Needle, Volume I

Niccolo Zoppino
Esamplario di Lavori,
1530

A Garden of Delightful Designs for Needlework, Gathered from the Most August and Ancient Books Writ upon The *Excellency of the Needle;* with which You may Devise and Work Most Beautiful and Glorious Works in Various Kinds of Embroidery, which shall bear Witness to Your Industry and Skill.

Compiled and Annotated by
Mistress Kathryn Goodwyn, OL
(C. Kathryn Newell)
And Newly Reissued In this Form in 2012

INTRODUCTION

The title *Esemplario di lavori…* of 1531 translates to "Exemplar of Works". The rest of the run-on title style refers that it is intended for women to use as a design source for their needlework projects.

The patterns start right off with what I tend to refer to as "Moorish" or "Arabesque". I subsequently found these terms used in the next book by Tagliente. The characteristics of these patterns are similar to Celtic knot work but differ in style. Some of these patterns have been called by others "carpet centers" because they resemble the central motifs found on many Oriental rugs.

The foliage styled linear (i.e., free form) patterns could easily be used for weaving patterns for brocades or bands. Please note the presence of lively thistles, despite the fact that none of these patterns (as far as I know) are from Scottish sources.

There is a Pelican In Her Piety (an heraldic and Christian symbol) on one page. The ribbon below carries a Latin phrase which I cannot translate. I suspect the wording reflects on the Pelican In Her Piety motif. The Pelican in Her Piety is a symbol for self-sacrifice, as she feeds her brood with her own blood.

There now follows a wealth of charted patterns. These include patterns for what Italians of the time called "punto scritto" or "writing stitch". This is a Renaissance name for what we now call double-running. These patterns are charted without a gridded background. I am told they are easily charted for modern use. These double-running patterns often include tiny acorns.

There are many geometric bands which appear frequently in this and other pattern books of the time. Some look quite Scandinavian in nature to the modern eye, containing eight point stars. Such patterns are common to many cultures worldwide, over centuries. Many patterns are what I call "brocaded", by which I mean repeated motifs contained within grids or structures. They could have been used for weaving as well as embroidery. I have used some of them myself to solidly cover evenweave fabric.

Zoppino, Niccolo (Aristotile) ***Esamplario di Lavori* 1530**

This method can be technically called "canvas work": I use the evenweave as the canvas, rather than modern needlepoint canvas.

A great many of these geometric bands strike me as German, as I have seen them in other German pattern books of the time. There were no copyright laws at the time so printers constantly "pirated" from each other's books.

Some of these patterns have been seen charted as Opus Teutonicum, a medieval form of counted work that eventually evolved into Florentine Stitch or what we now call Bargello.

One pattern has what I have learned is stylized Kufic script, as shown in Countess Ianthé d'Averoigne, O.L.'s (Kim Brody Salazar) book, *The New Carolingian Modelbook*. Kufic is a form of Arabic writing.

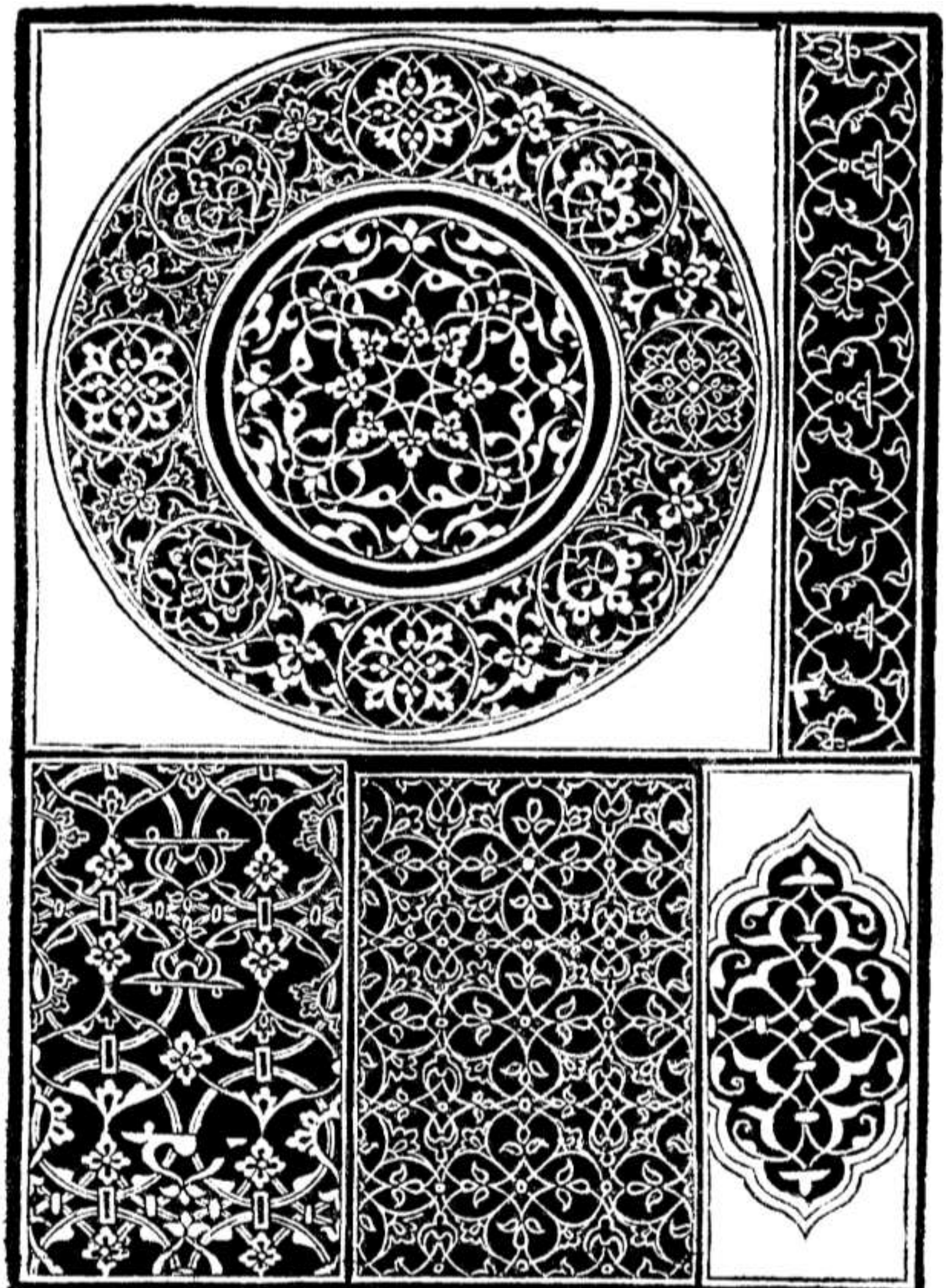
There is one pattern done on the diagonal, a rare style of pattern. There are some in the 1597 Johan Sibmacher book, *Schoen Neus Modelbuch...* I am not sure what the use of such diagonal patterns were for, unless for lacis. Lacis is a form of net darning, and was highly popular at the time, especially for coverings and curtains.

I find the plates of animals quite amusing and charming. Here one finds a housefly as large as a peacock! There is a variety of animals and insects, both real and fabulous. Birds are evident everywhere, as they often are in needlework patterns all over the world. I am not quite sure of all the species, but it's entertaining to guess what they are. The plates of flowers also turn up in later books, often with plates of fruits and/or a fruit basket.

This book ends with an alphabet, and the information that the book was printed in Venice, by Nicolo d'Aristotile, called Zoppino, 1530.

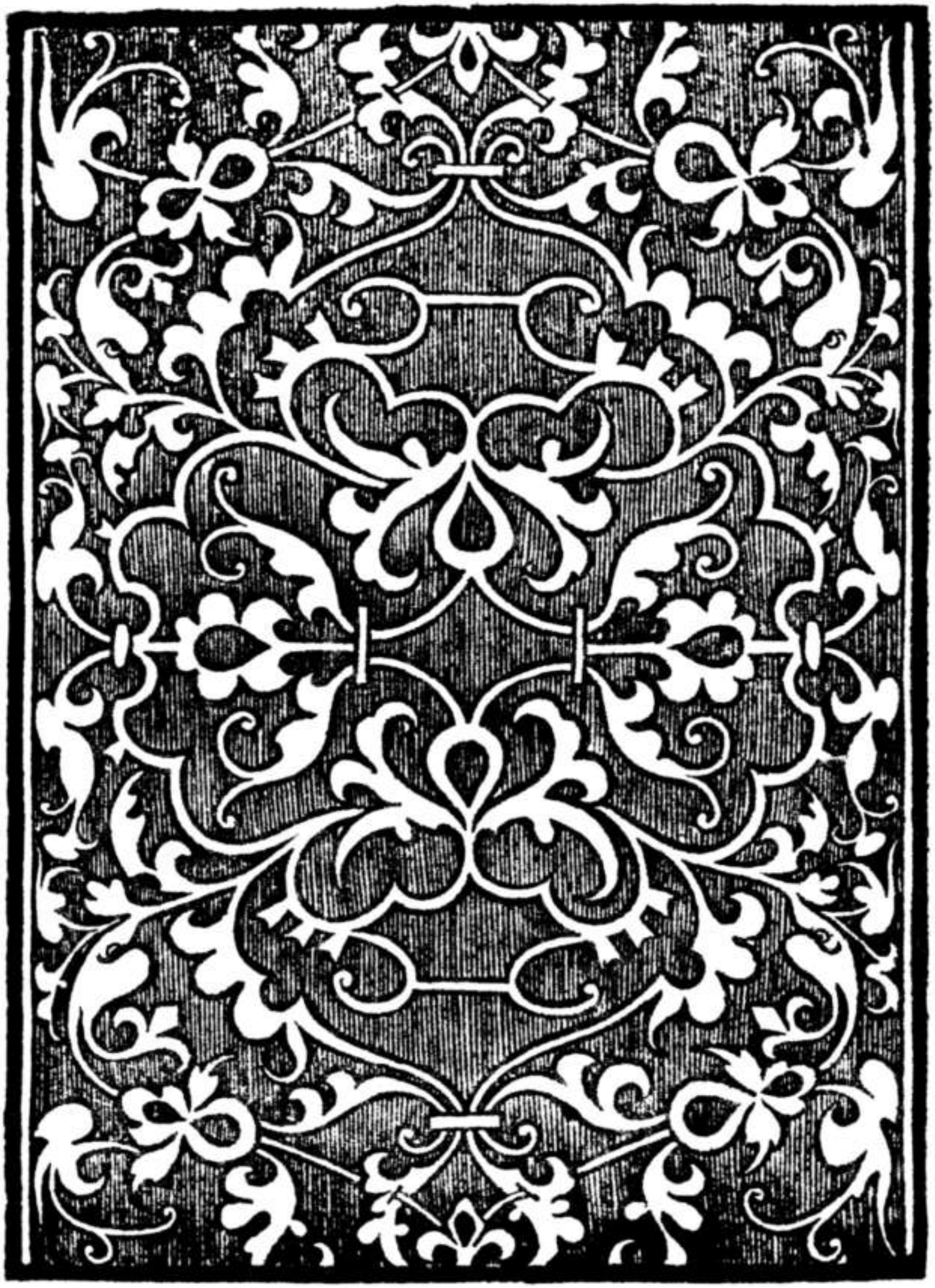
-Kathryn Goodwyn, 2011

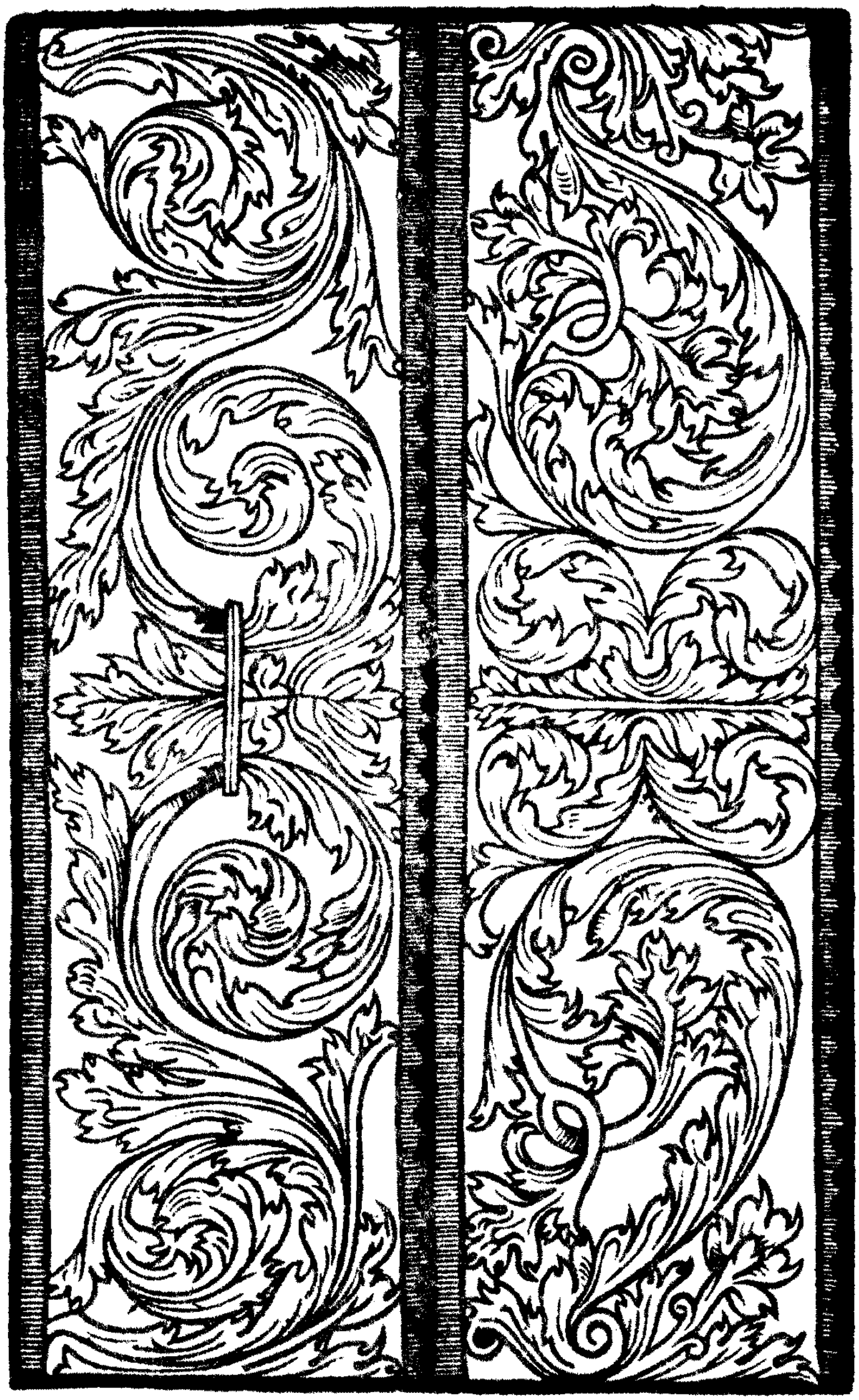

ESEMPLARIO
di lauori doue le tenere fanciulle
& altre donne nobile potranno
facilmente imparare il modo &
ordine di lauorare : cusire : rac
cammare : finalmente far tutte
quelle gentilezze et lodeuili ope
re : lequali po fare una donna uir
tuosa con laco in mano : con li
suoi compassi & misure.







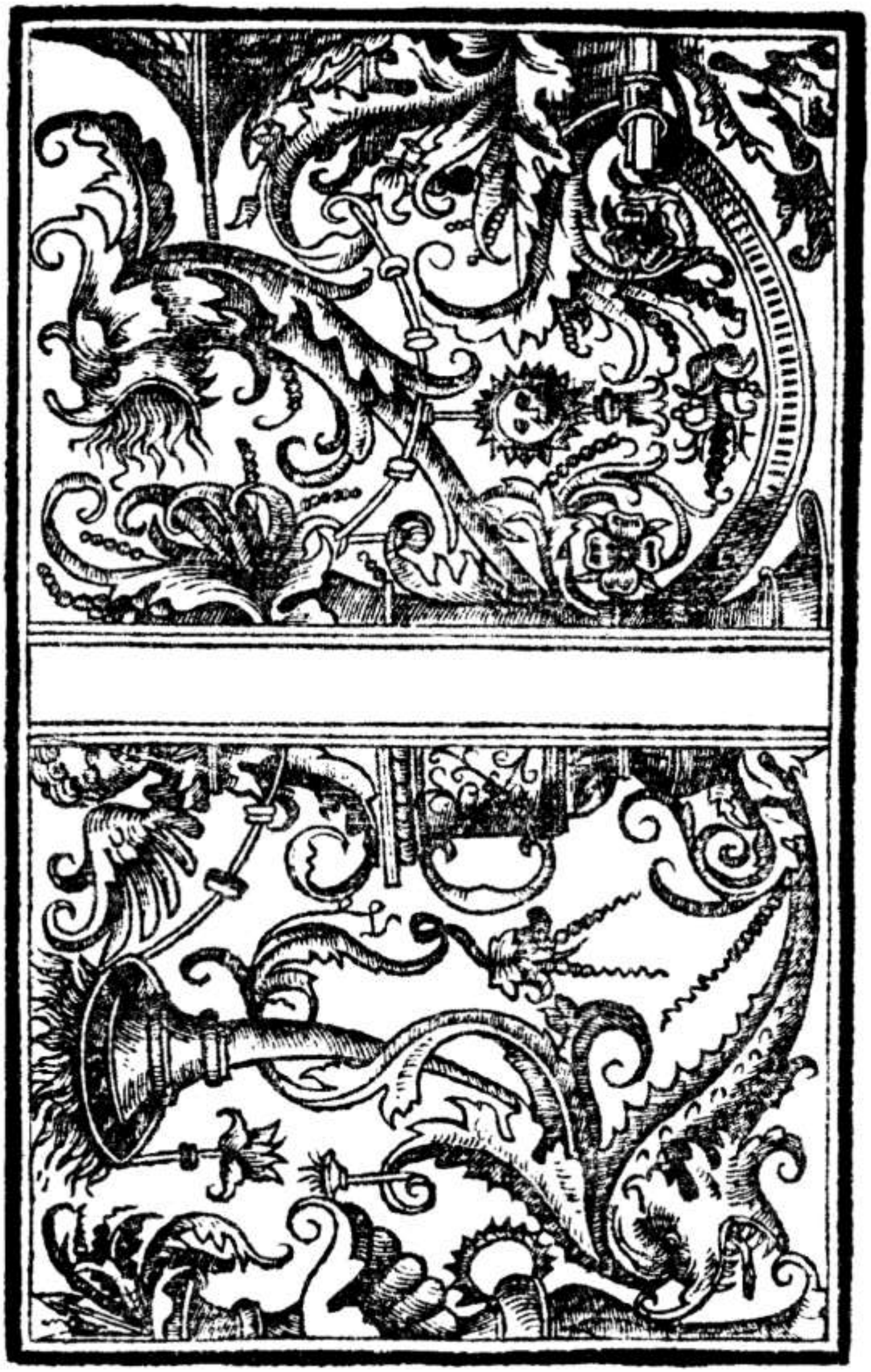


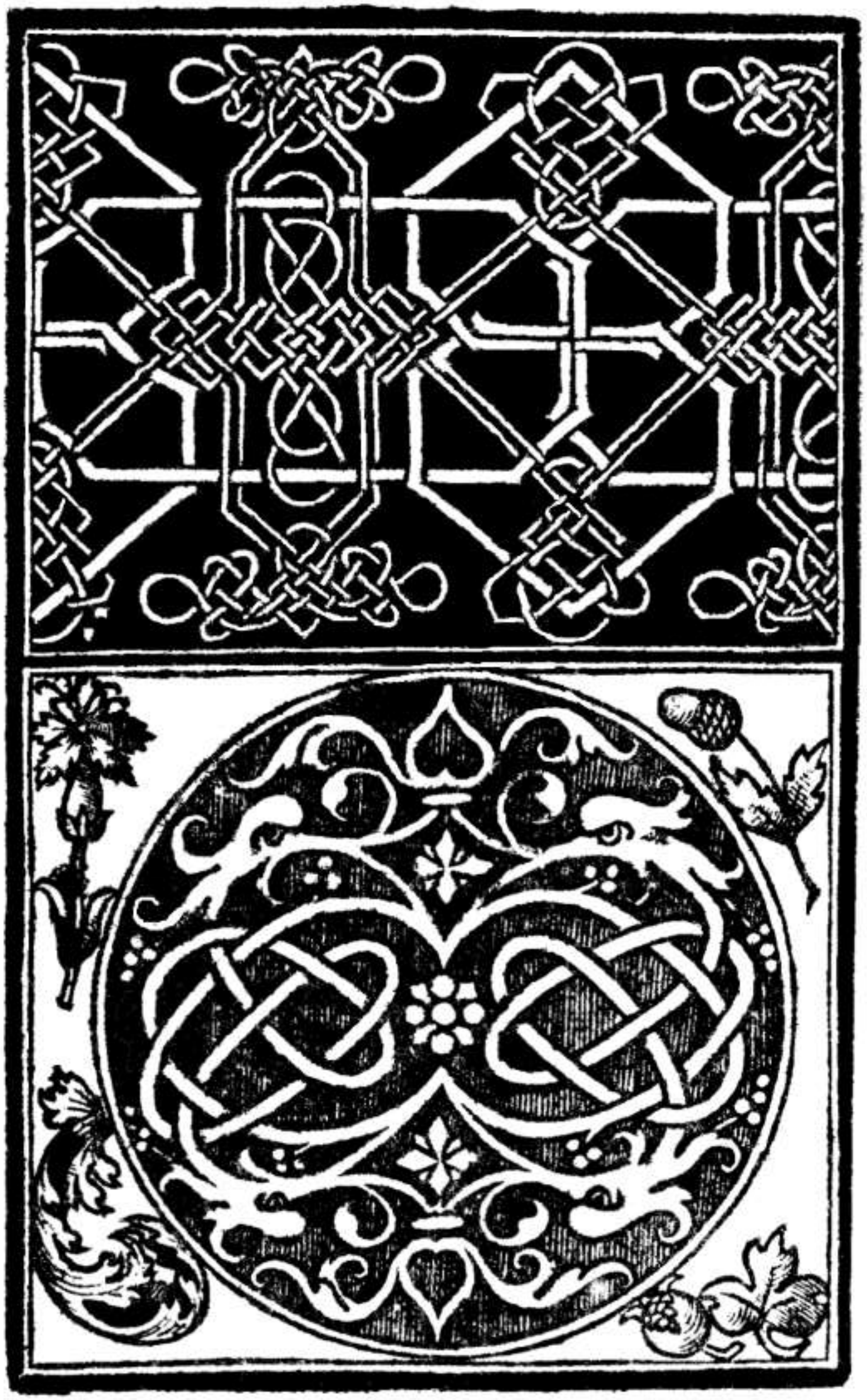





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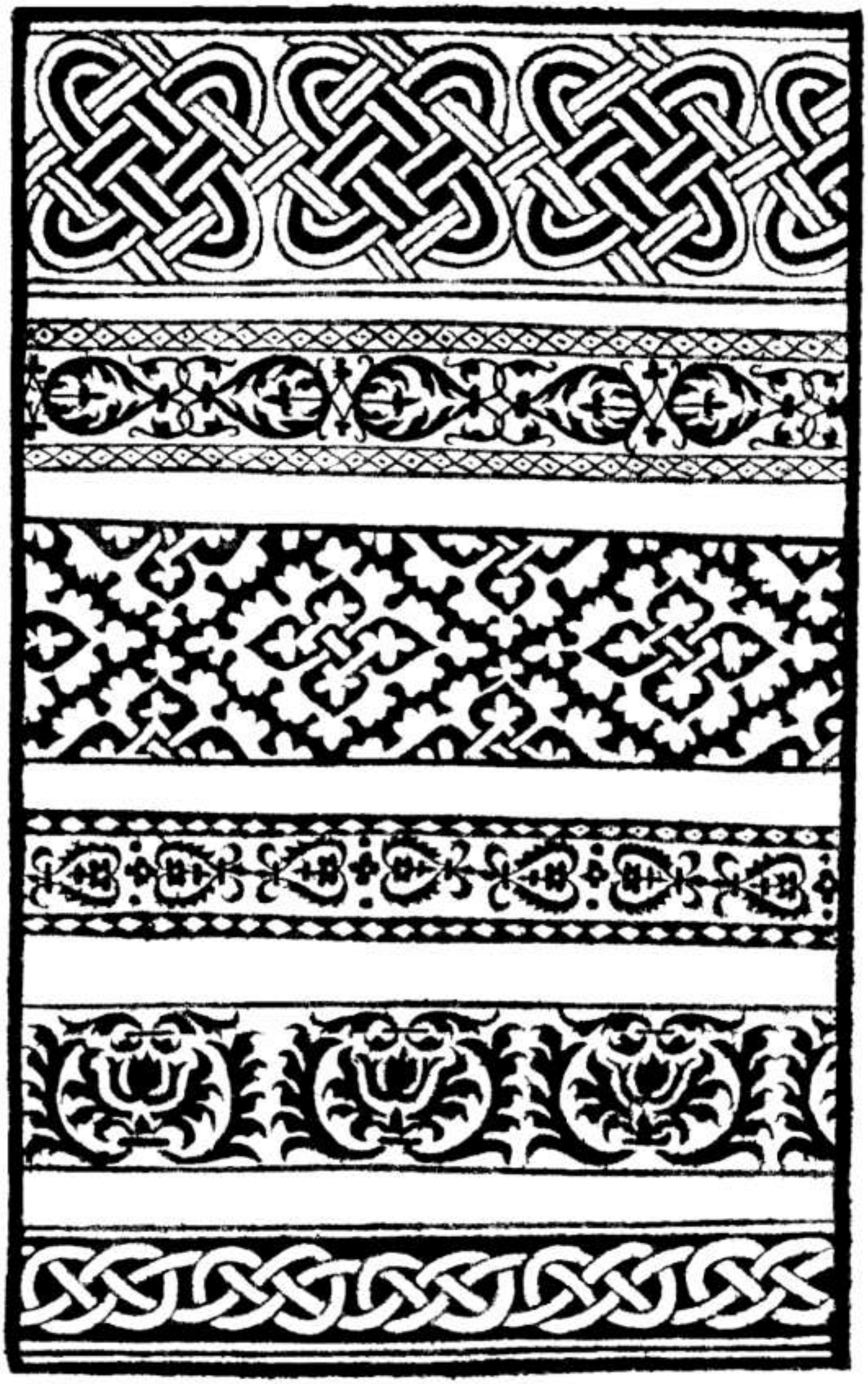


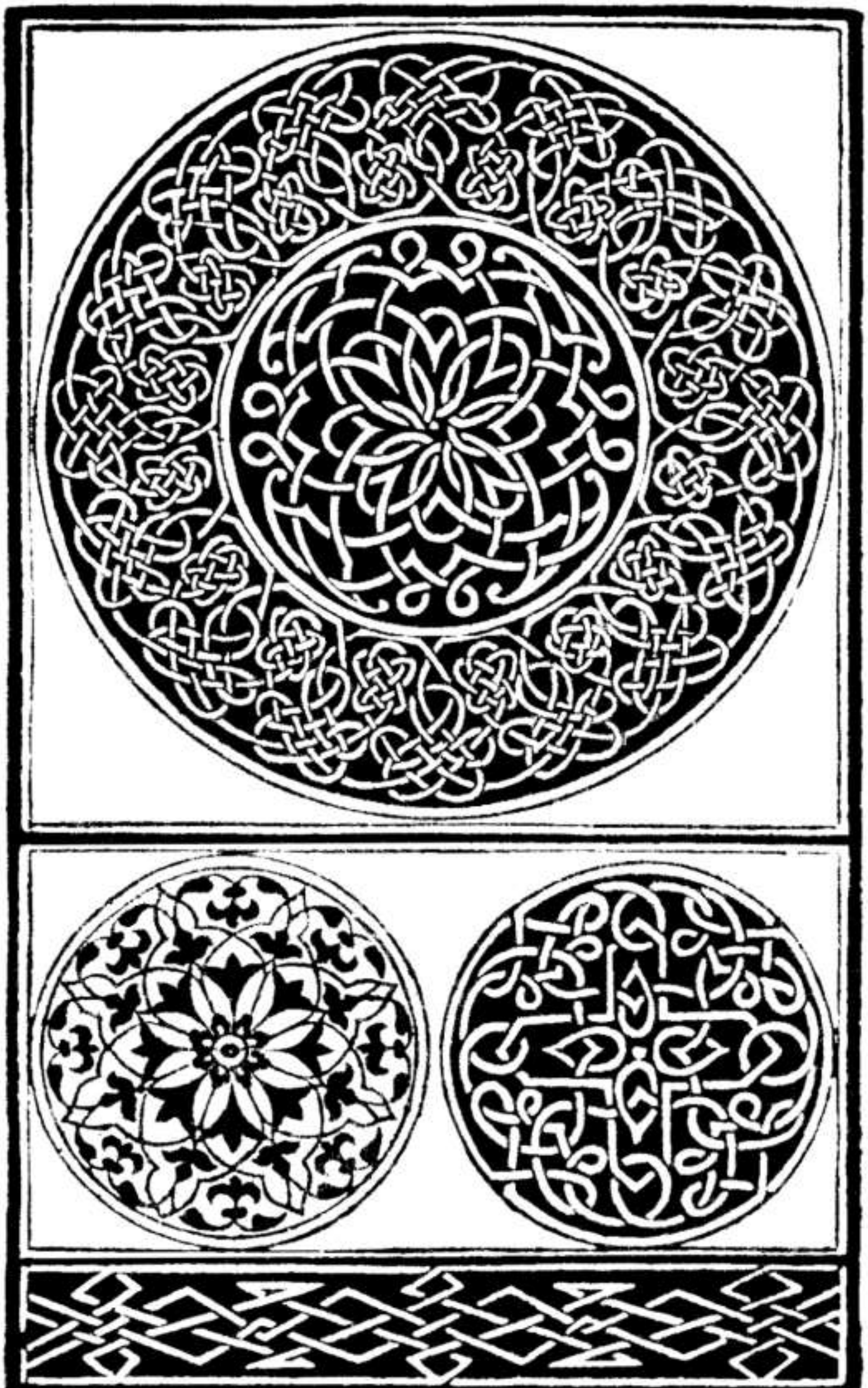


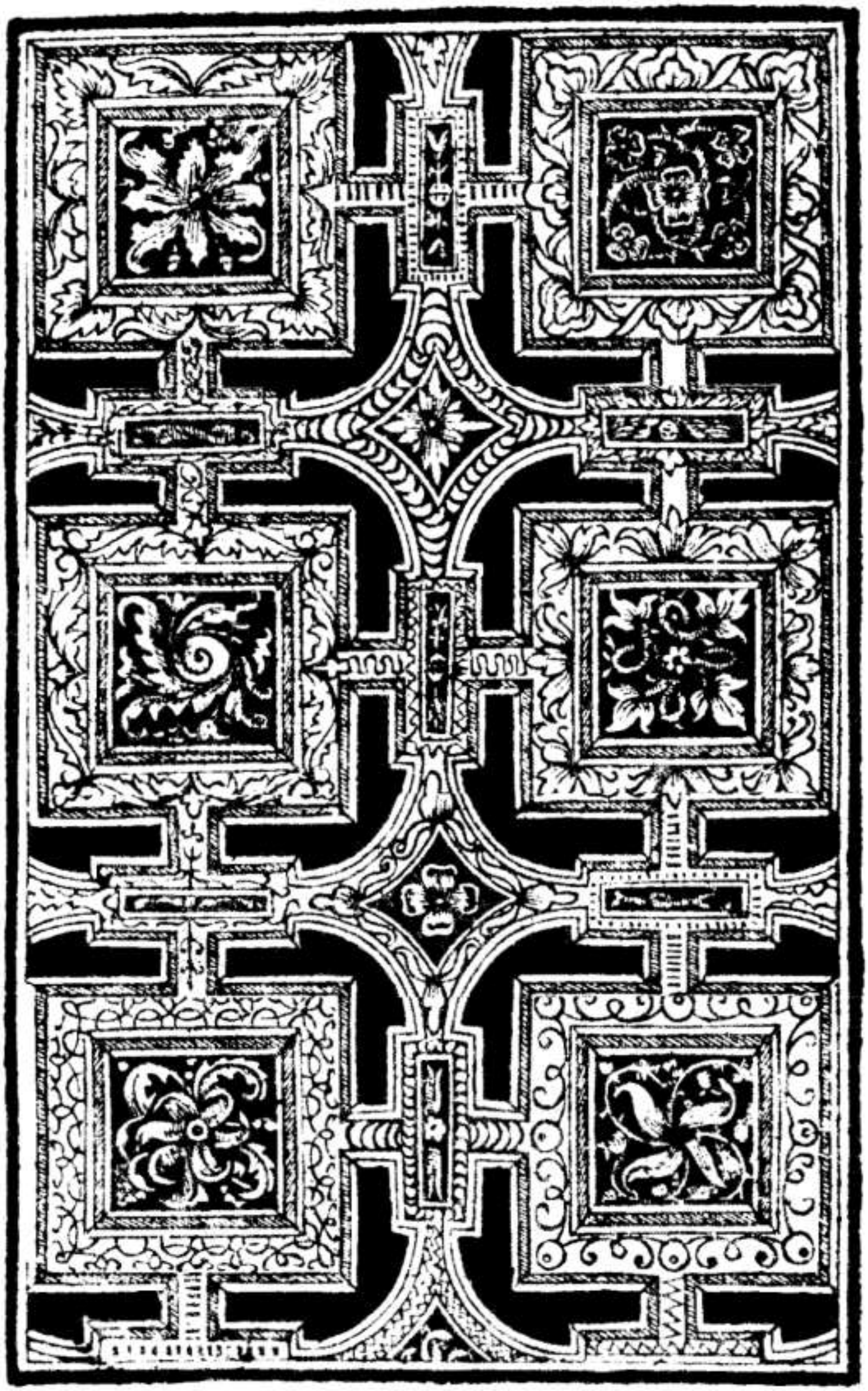


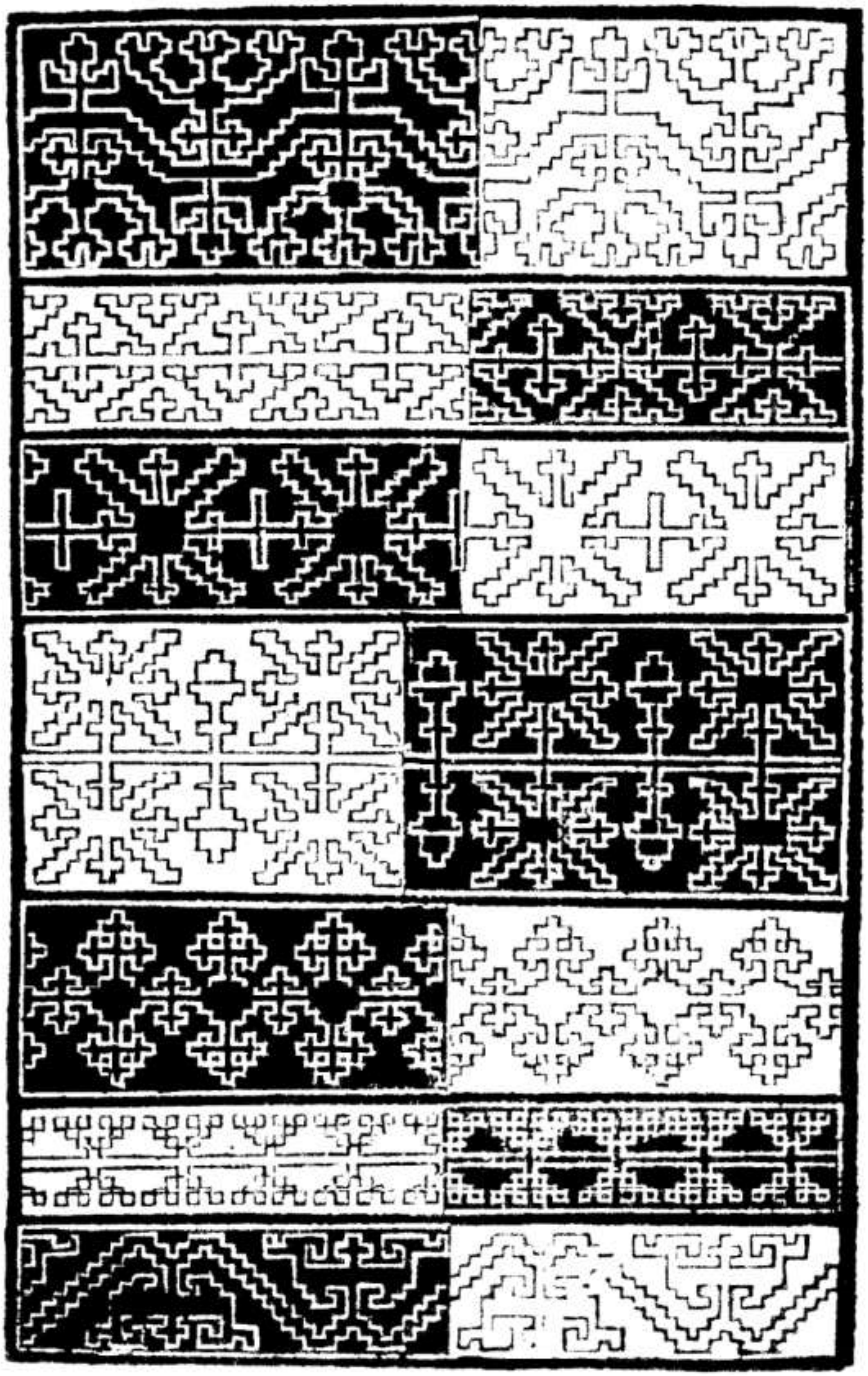


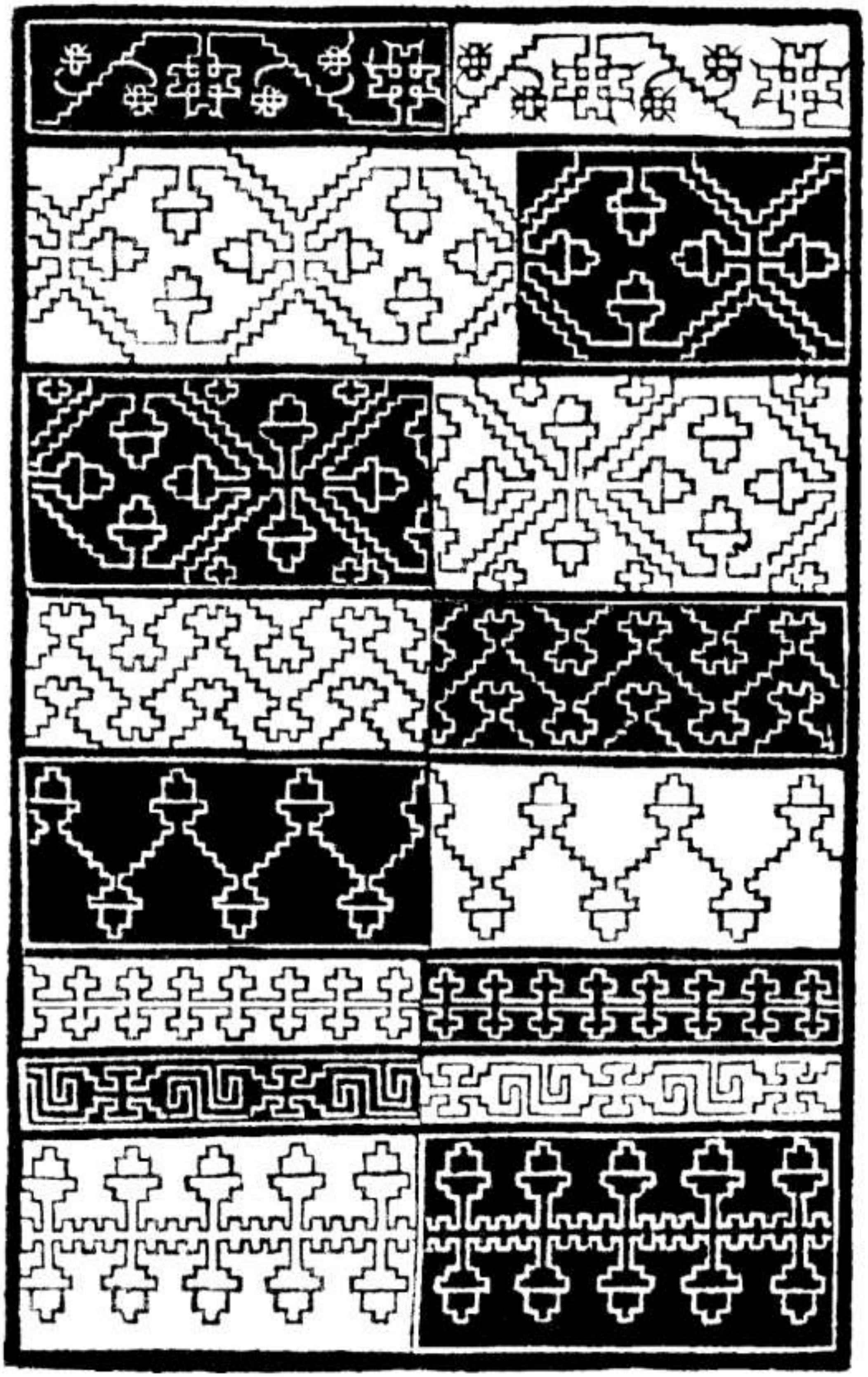




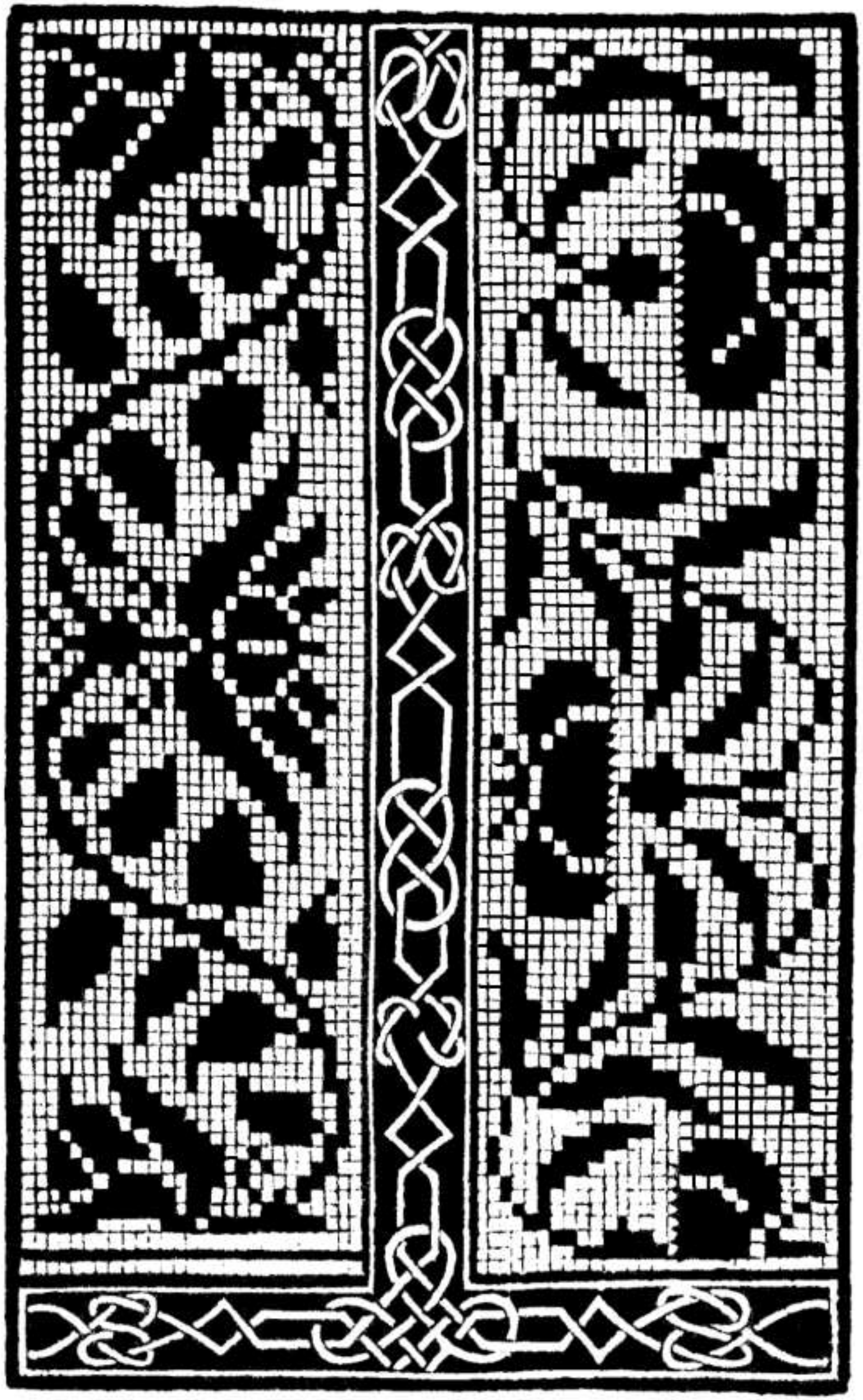


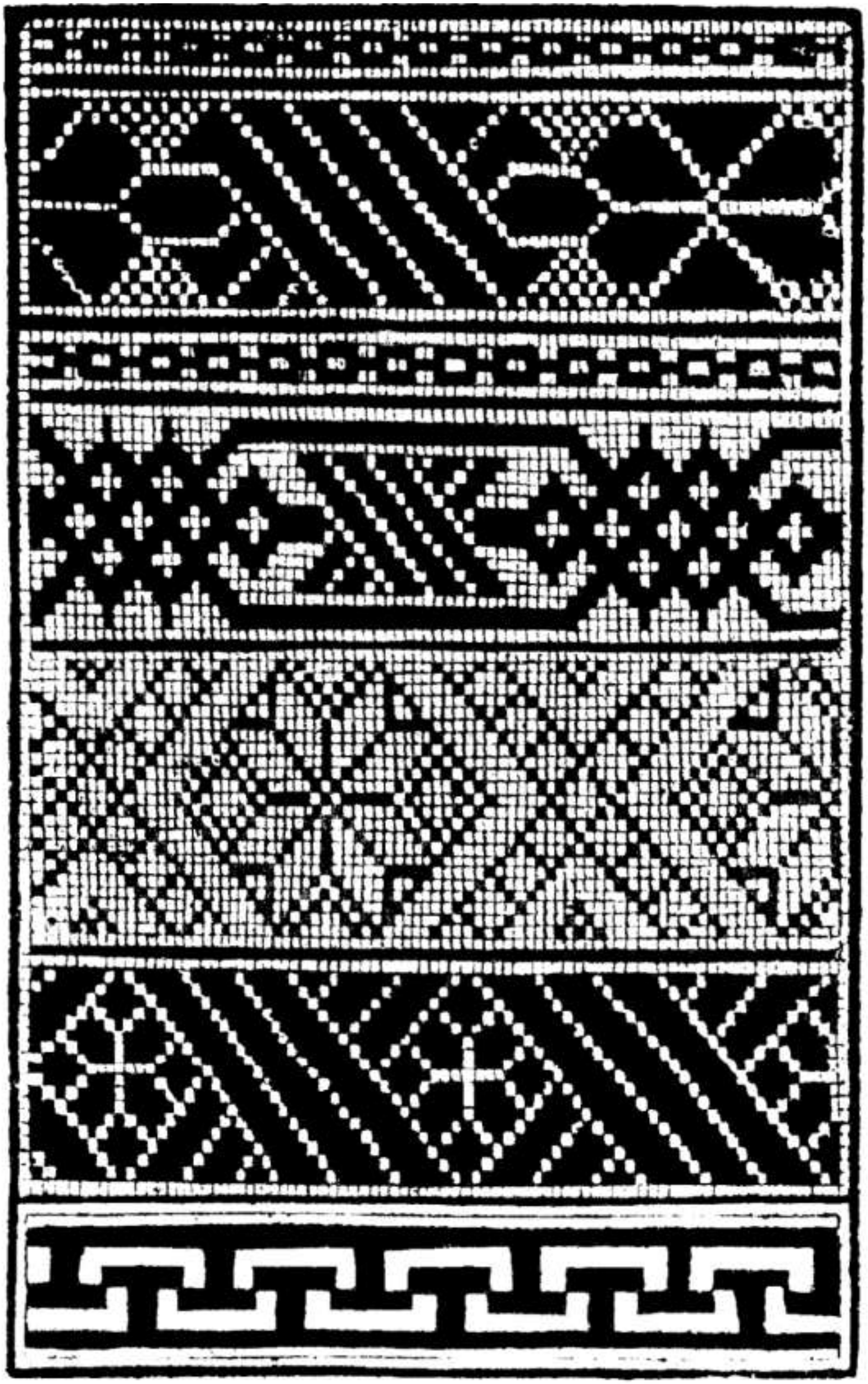


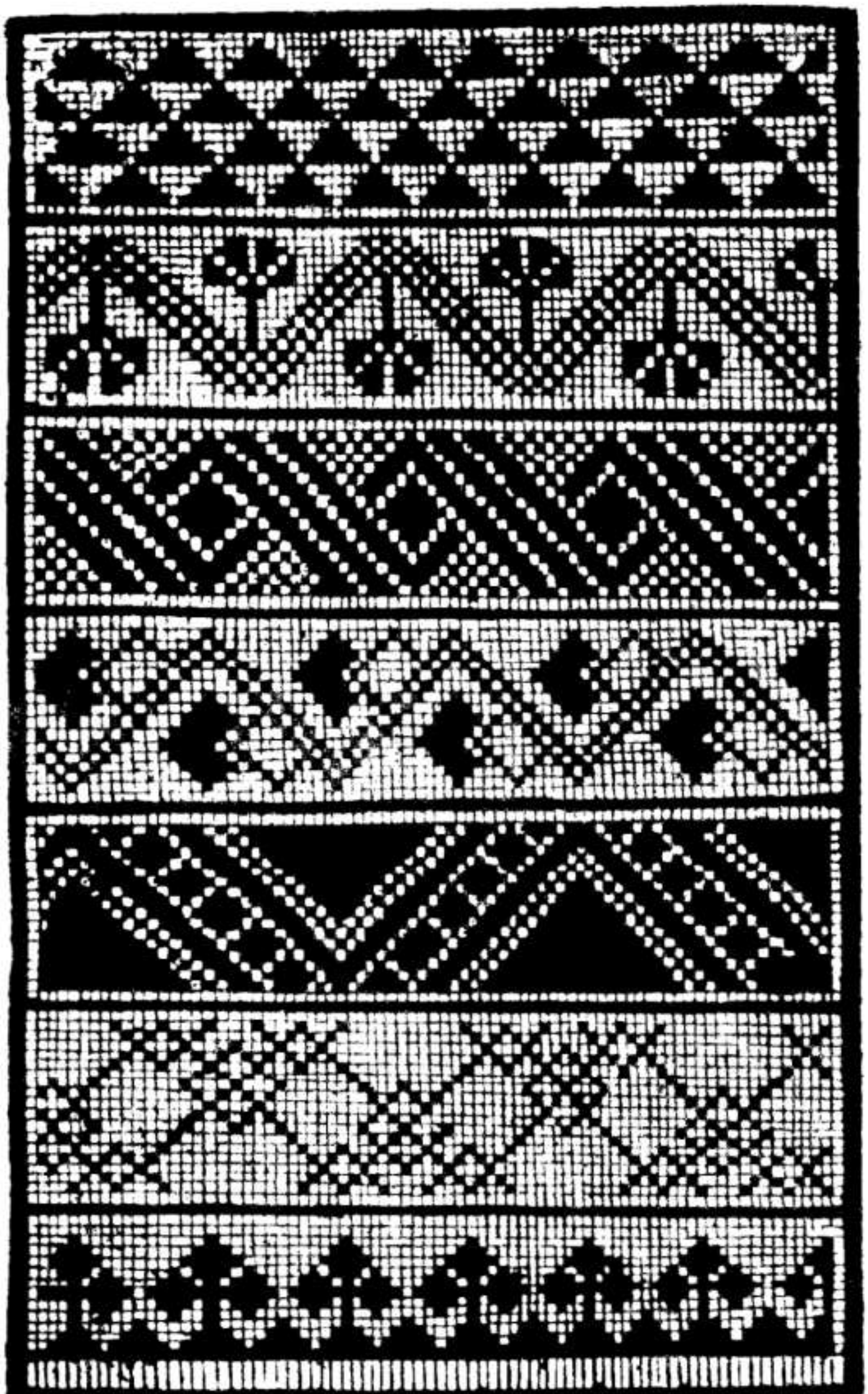


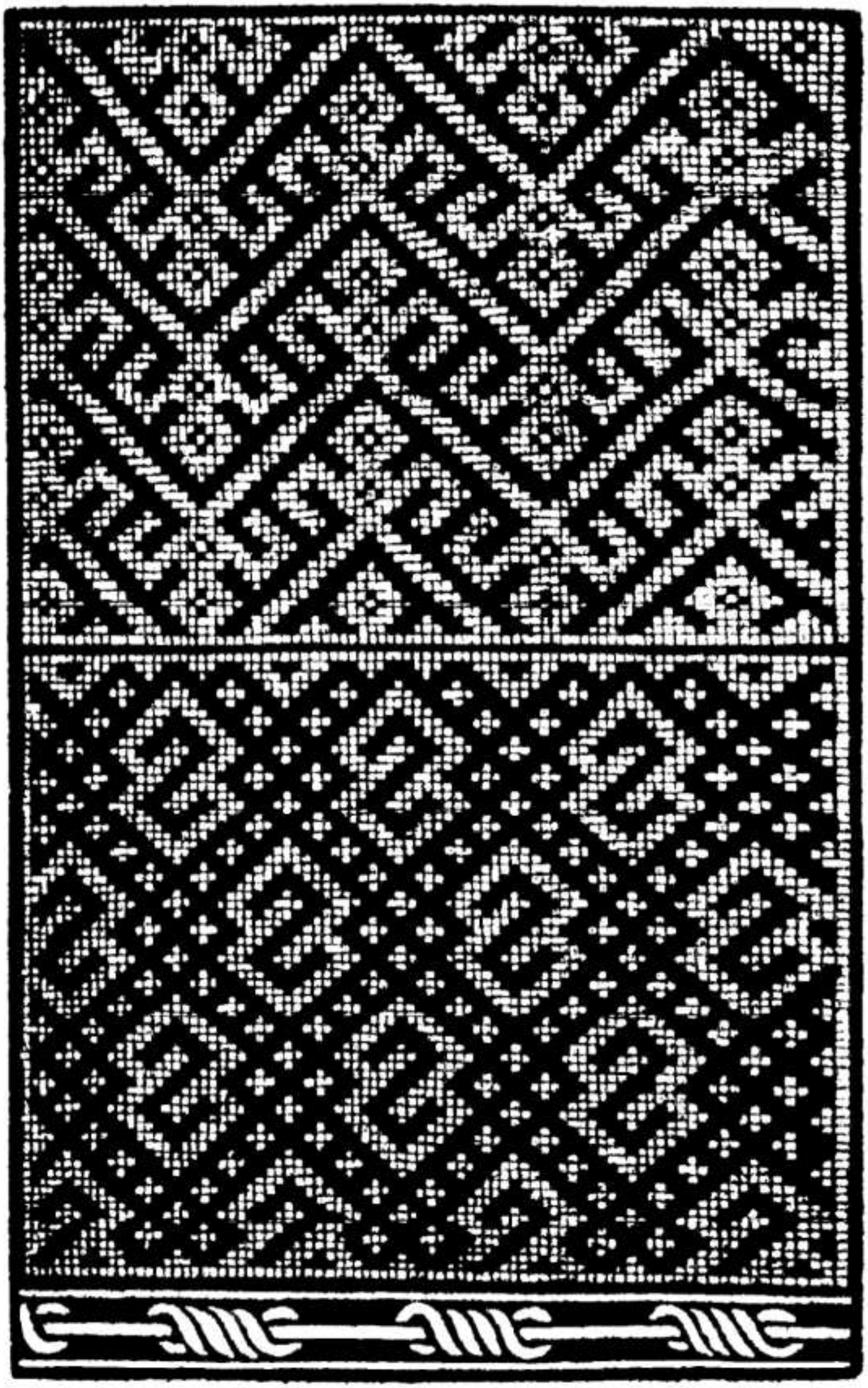


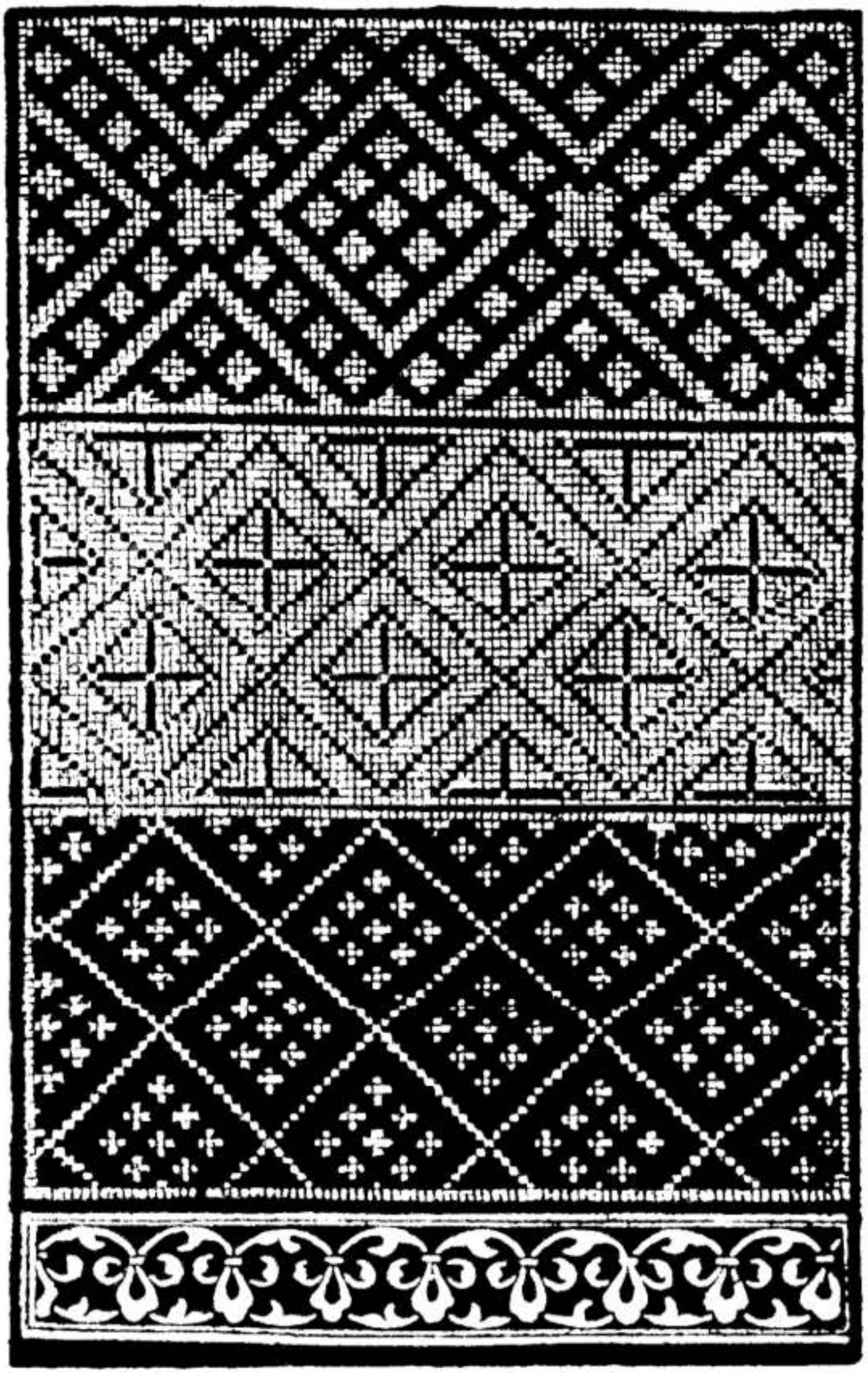
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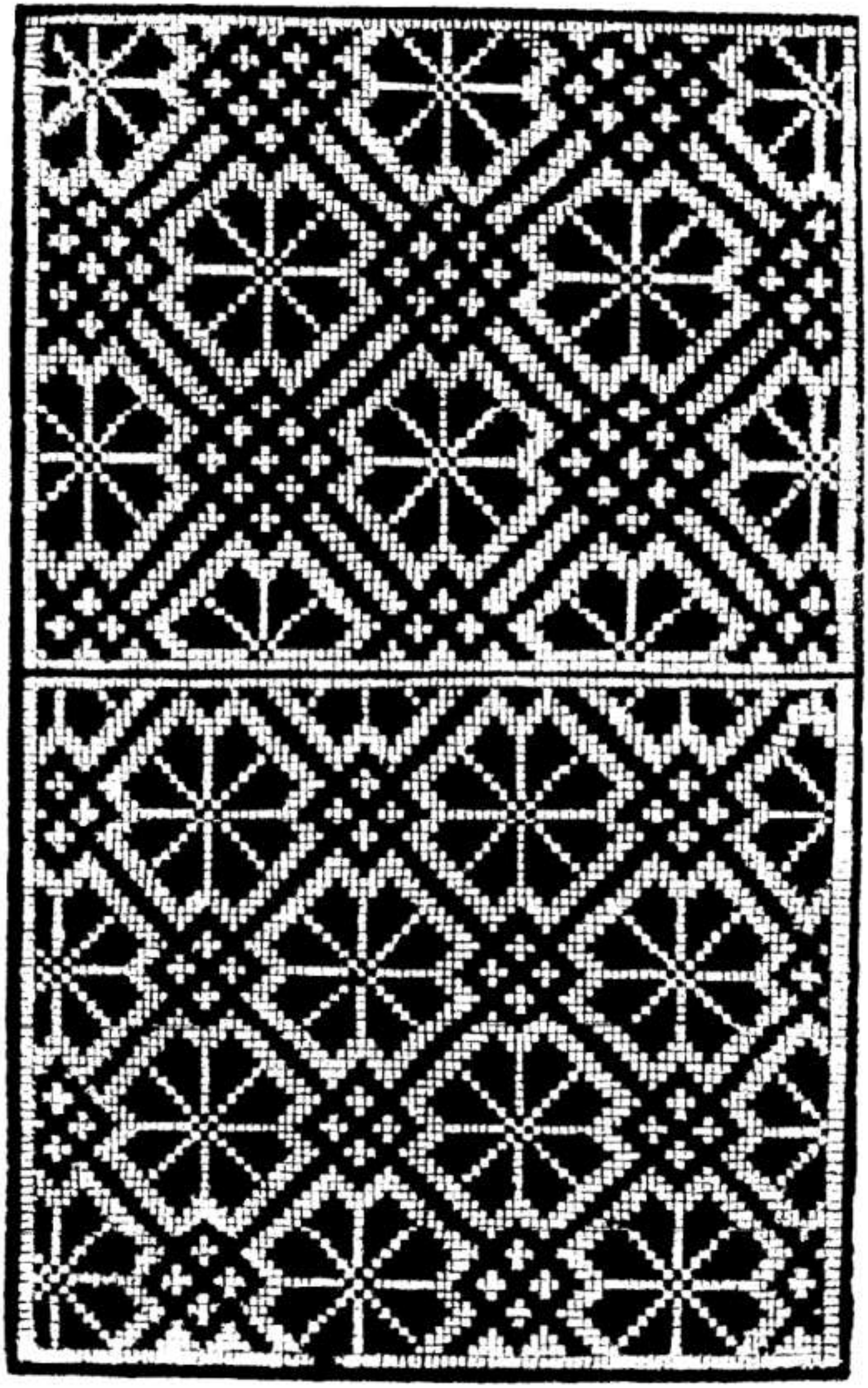


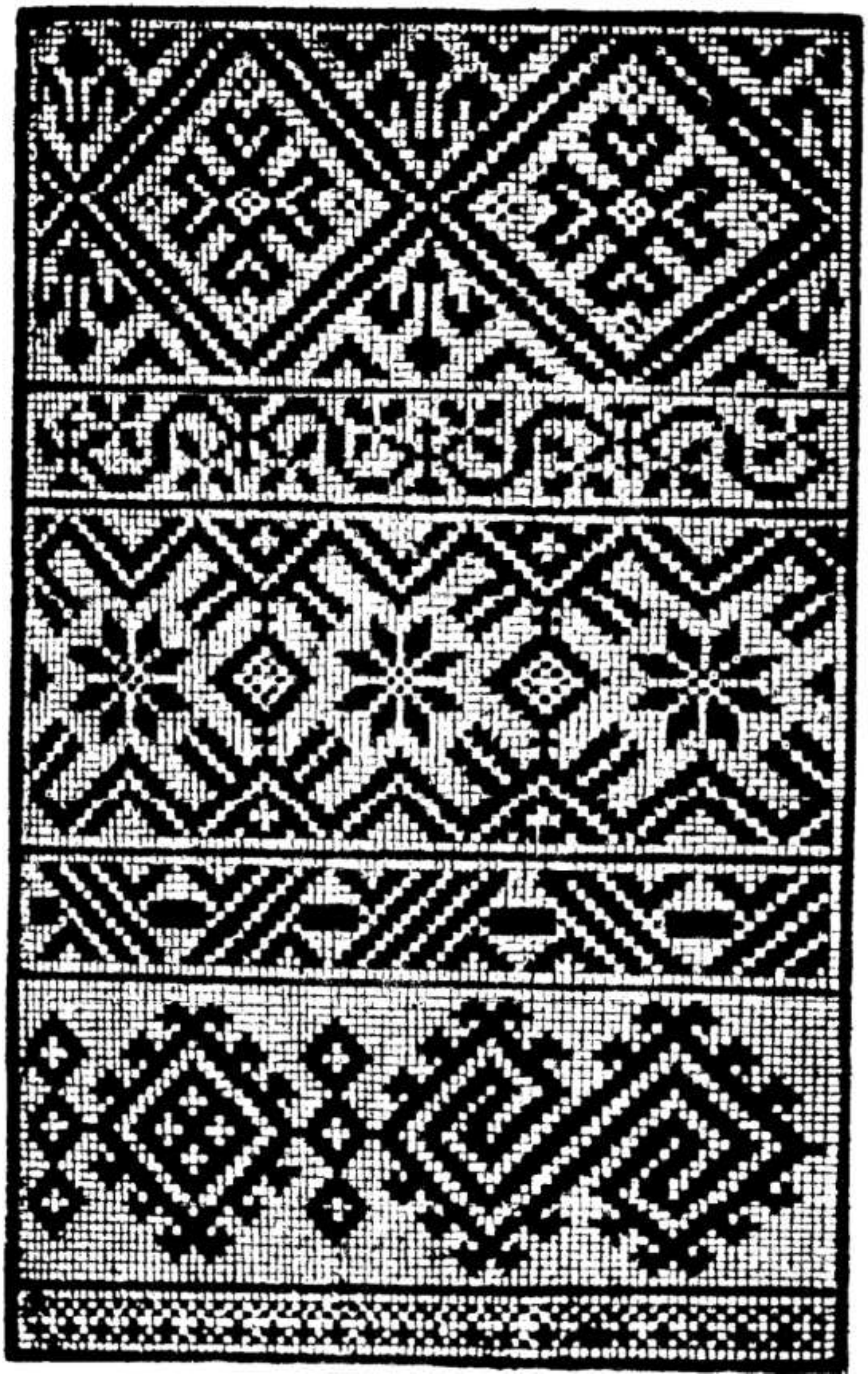


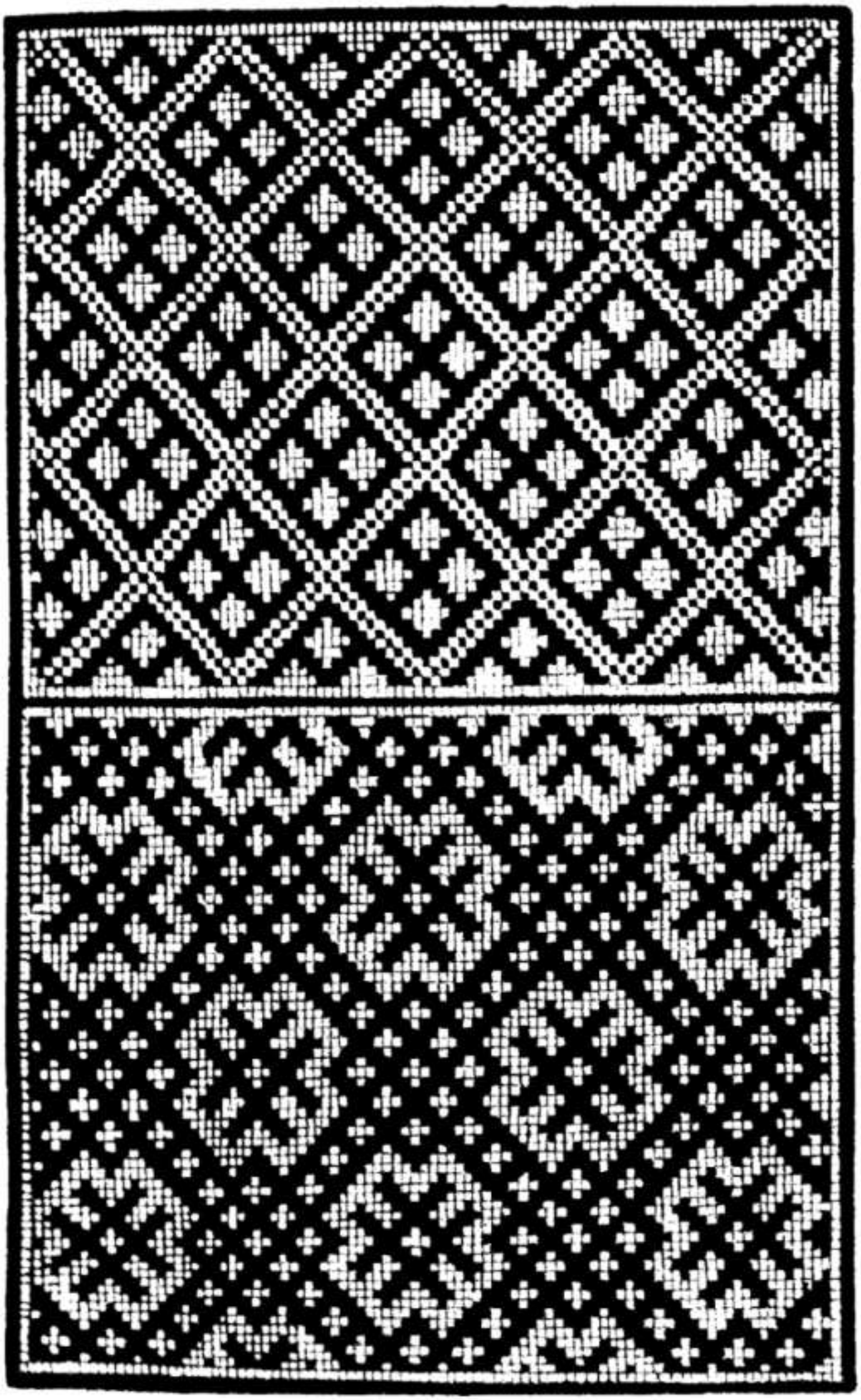


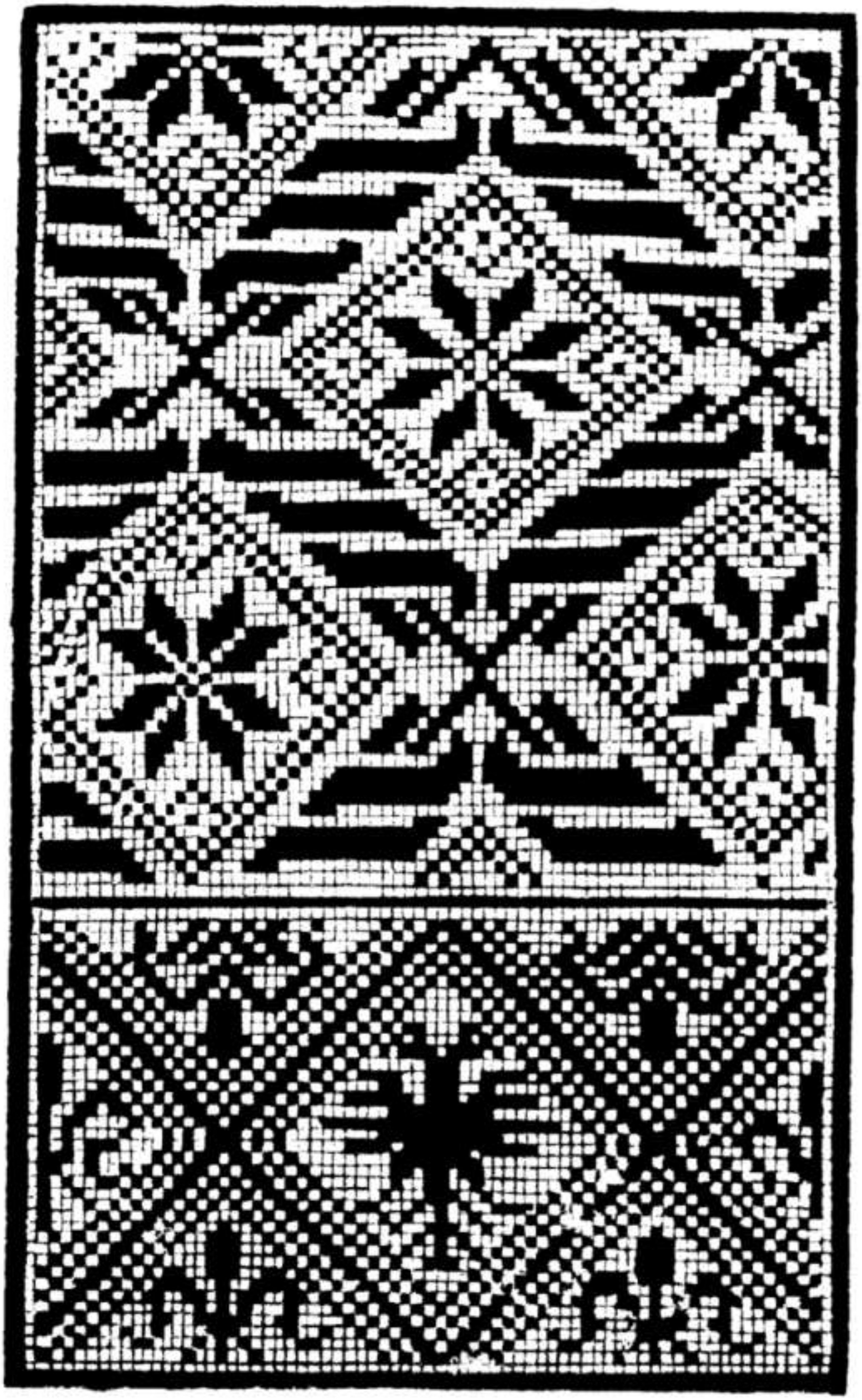




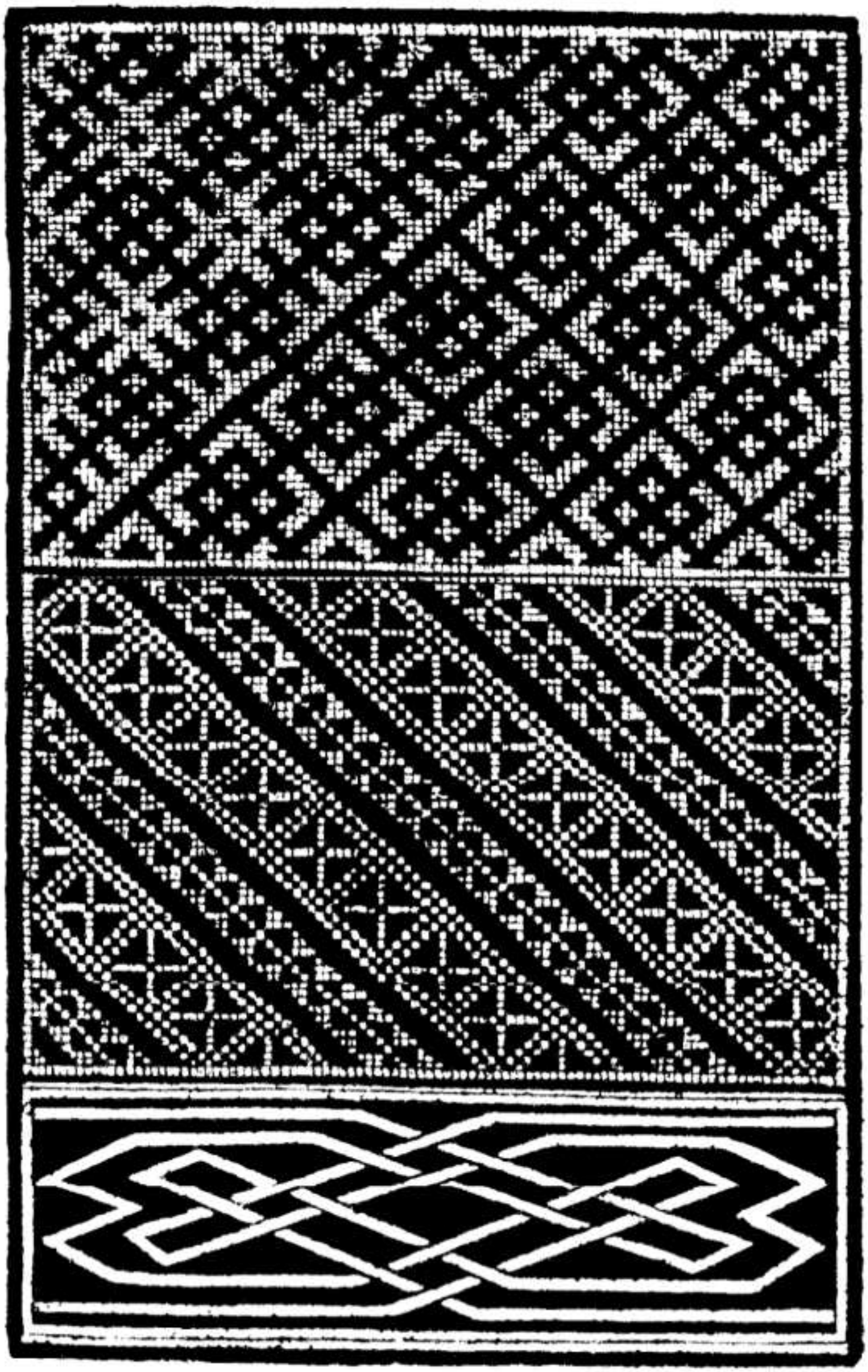


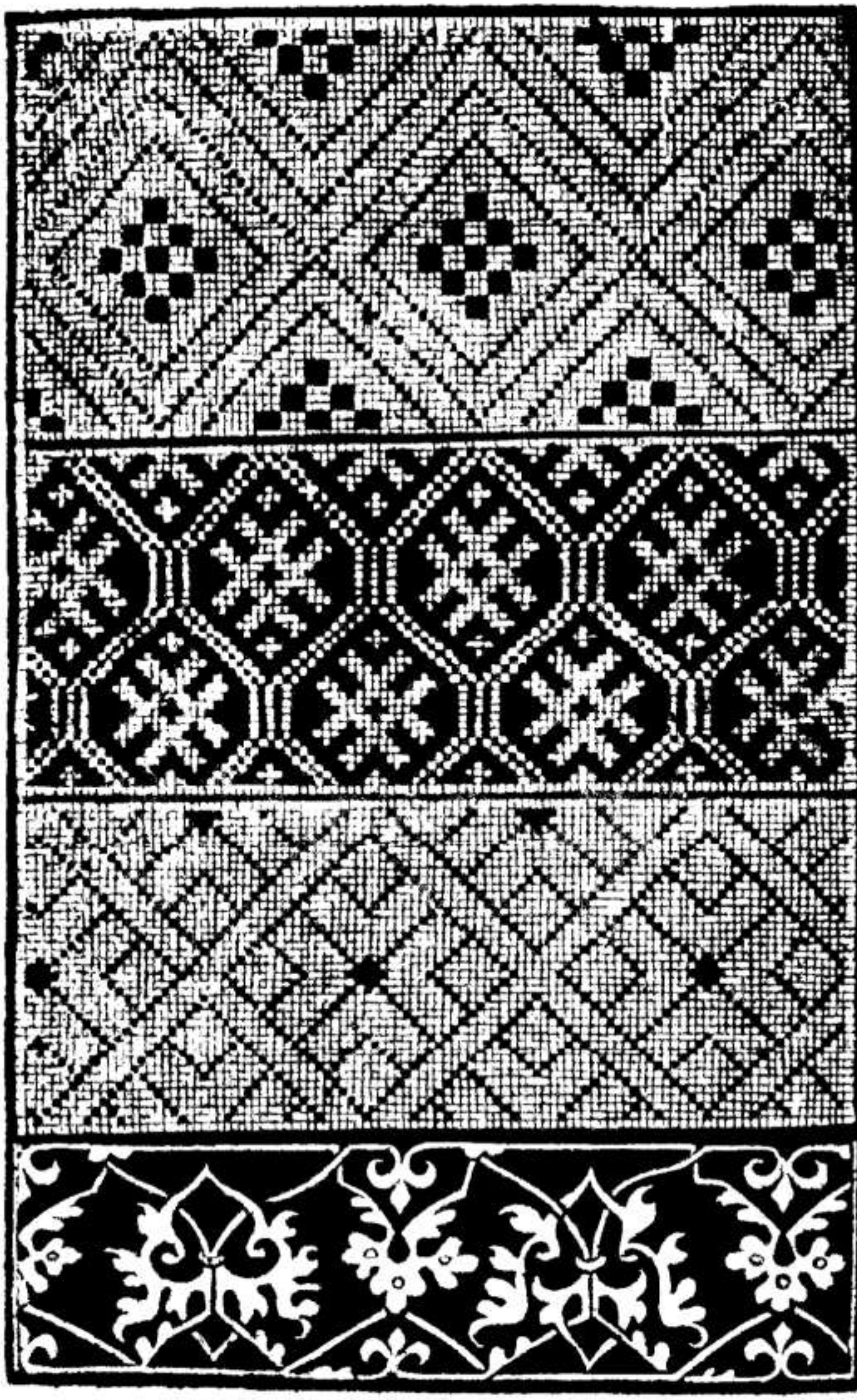


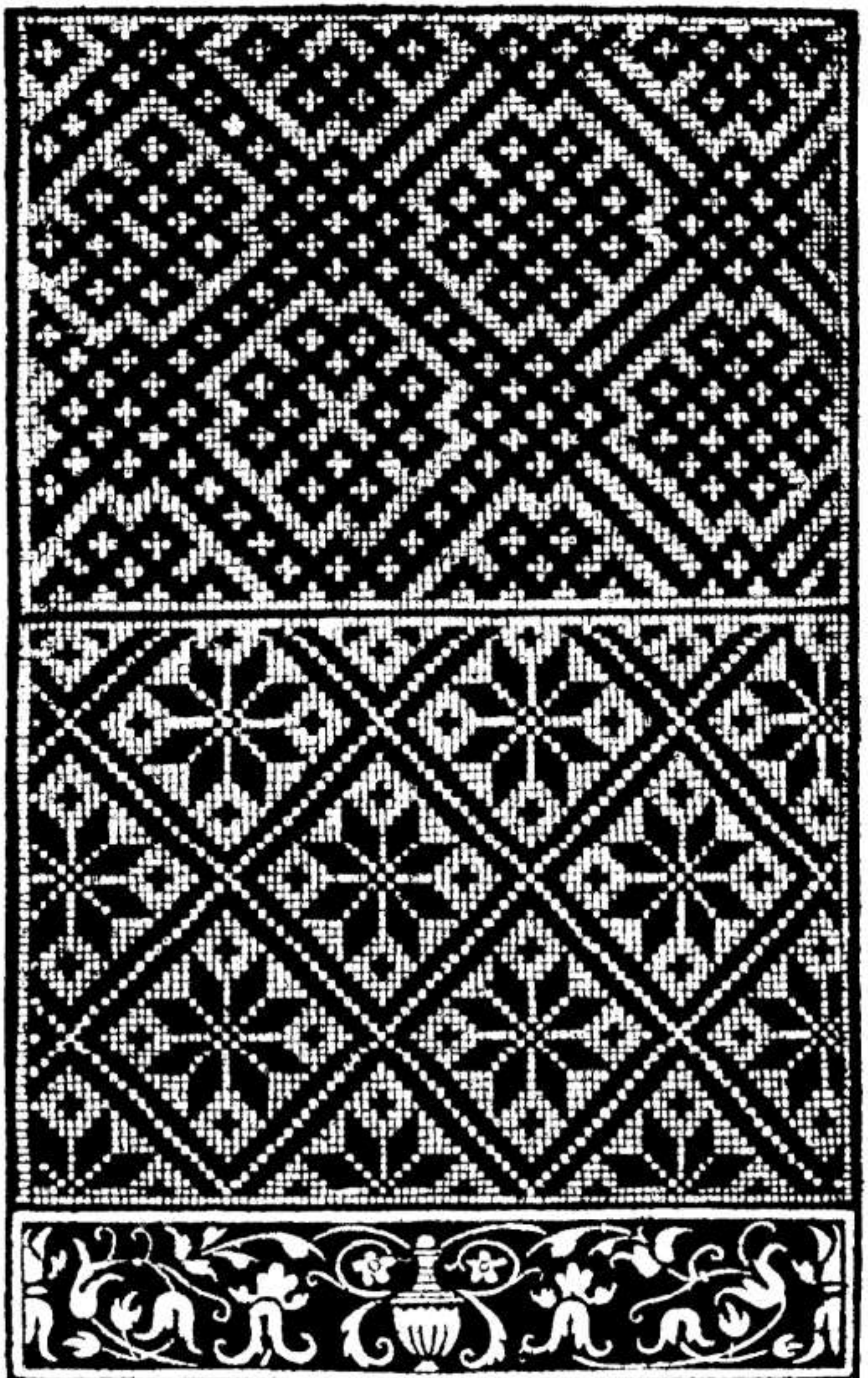


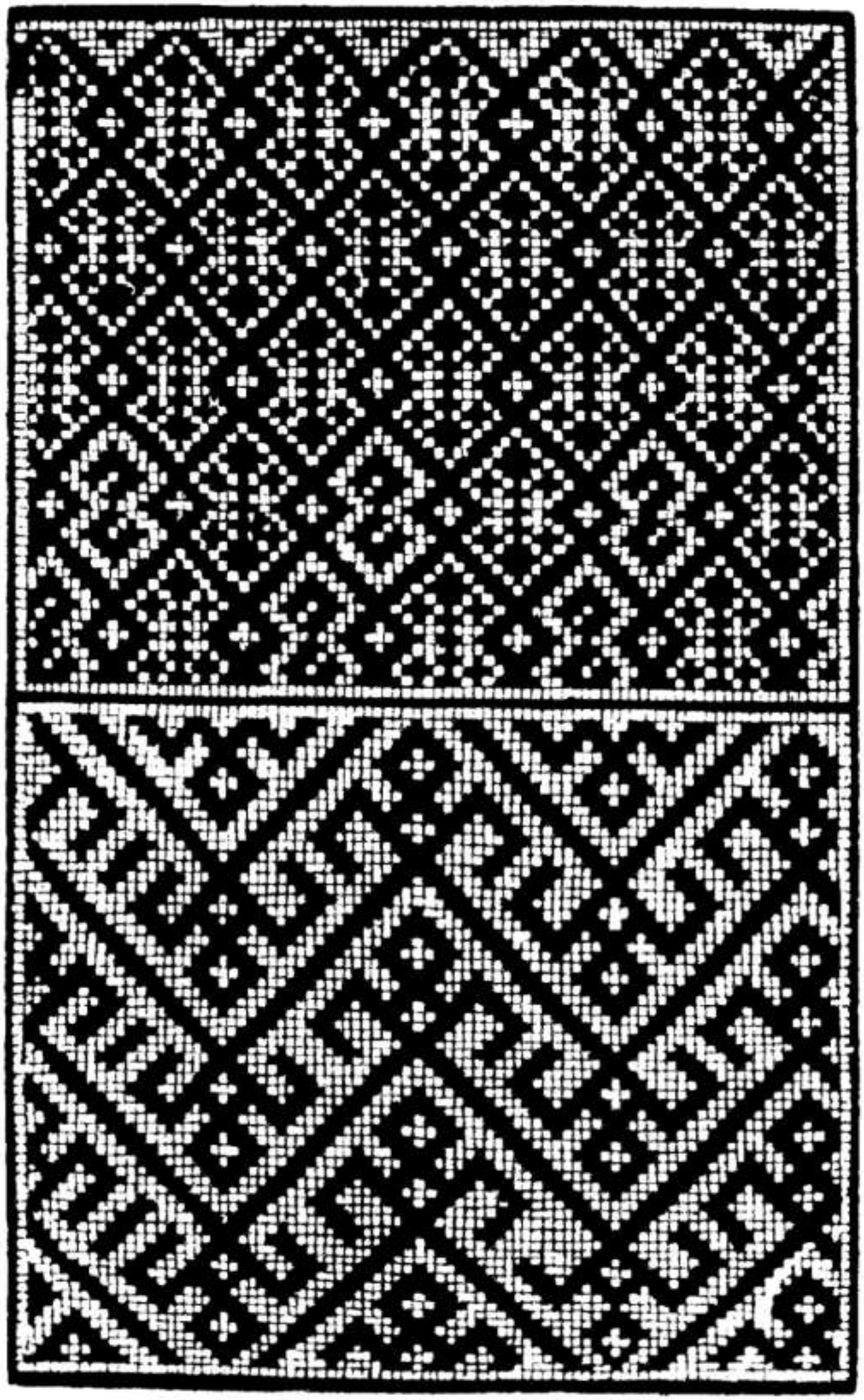


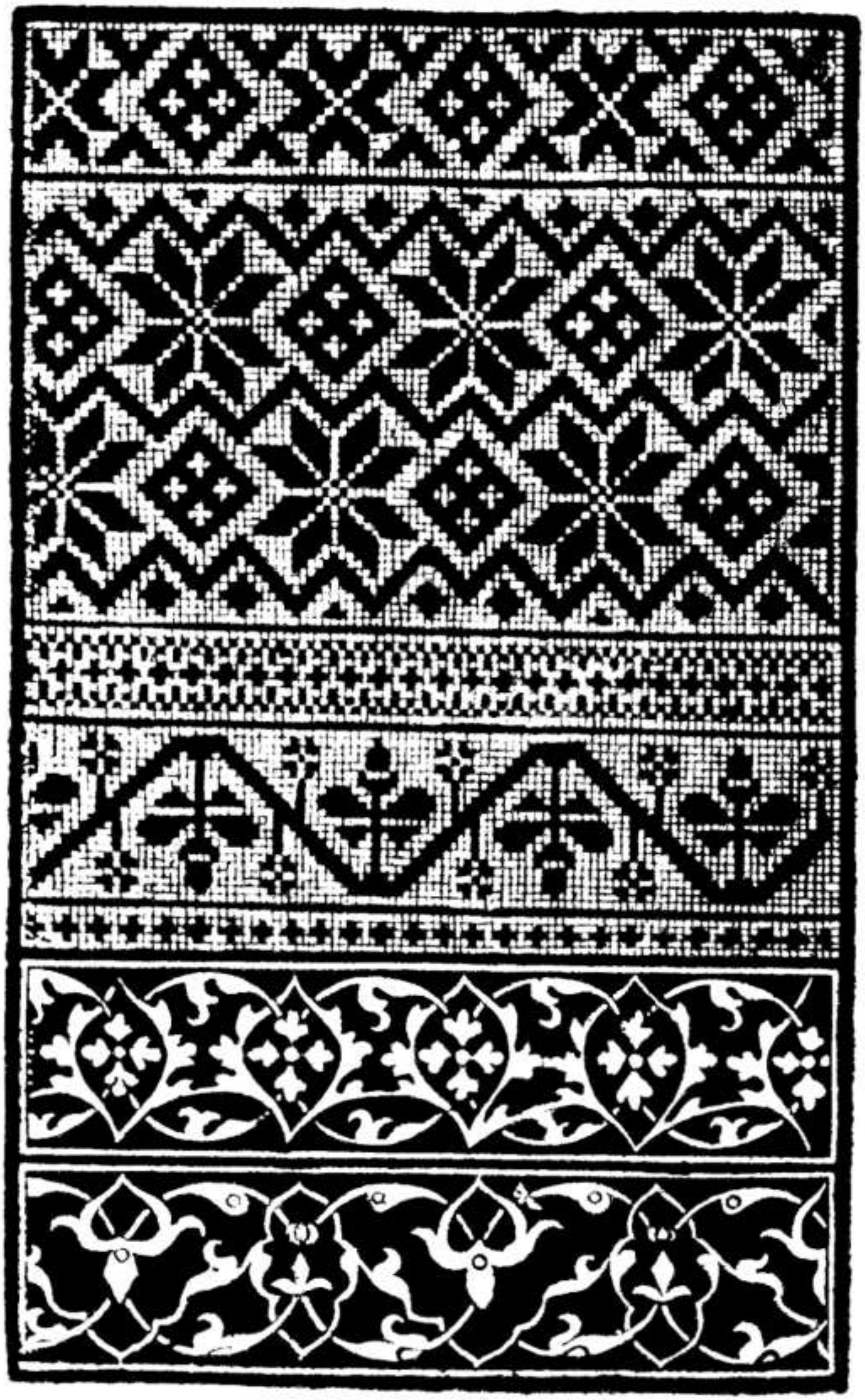


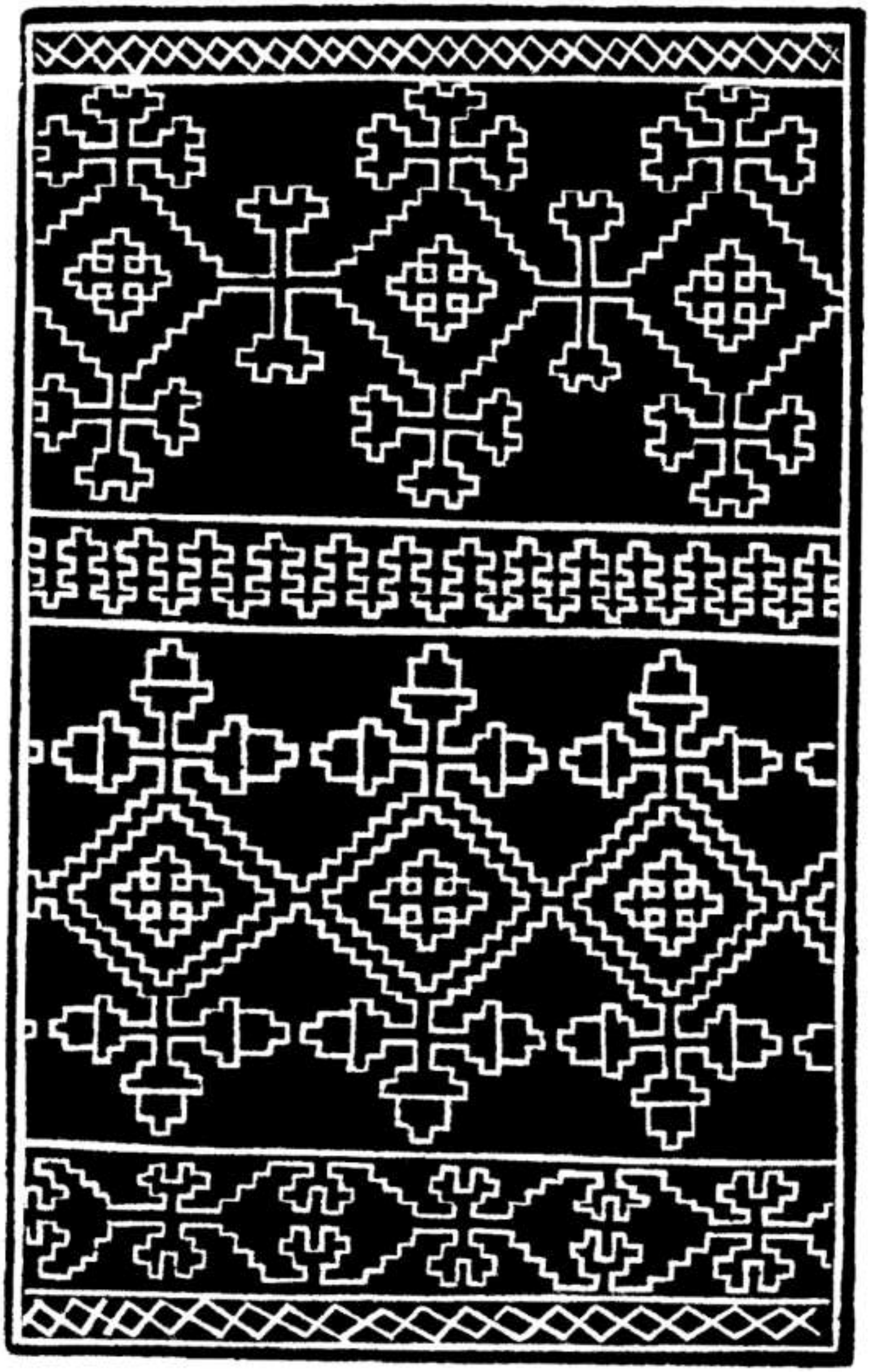


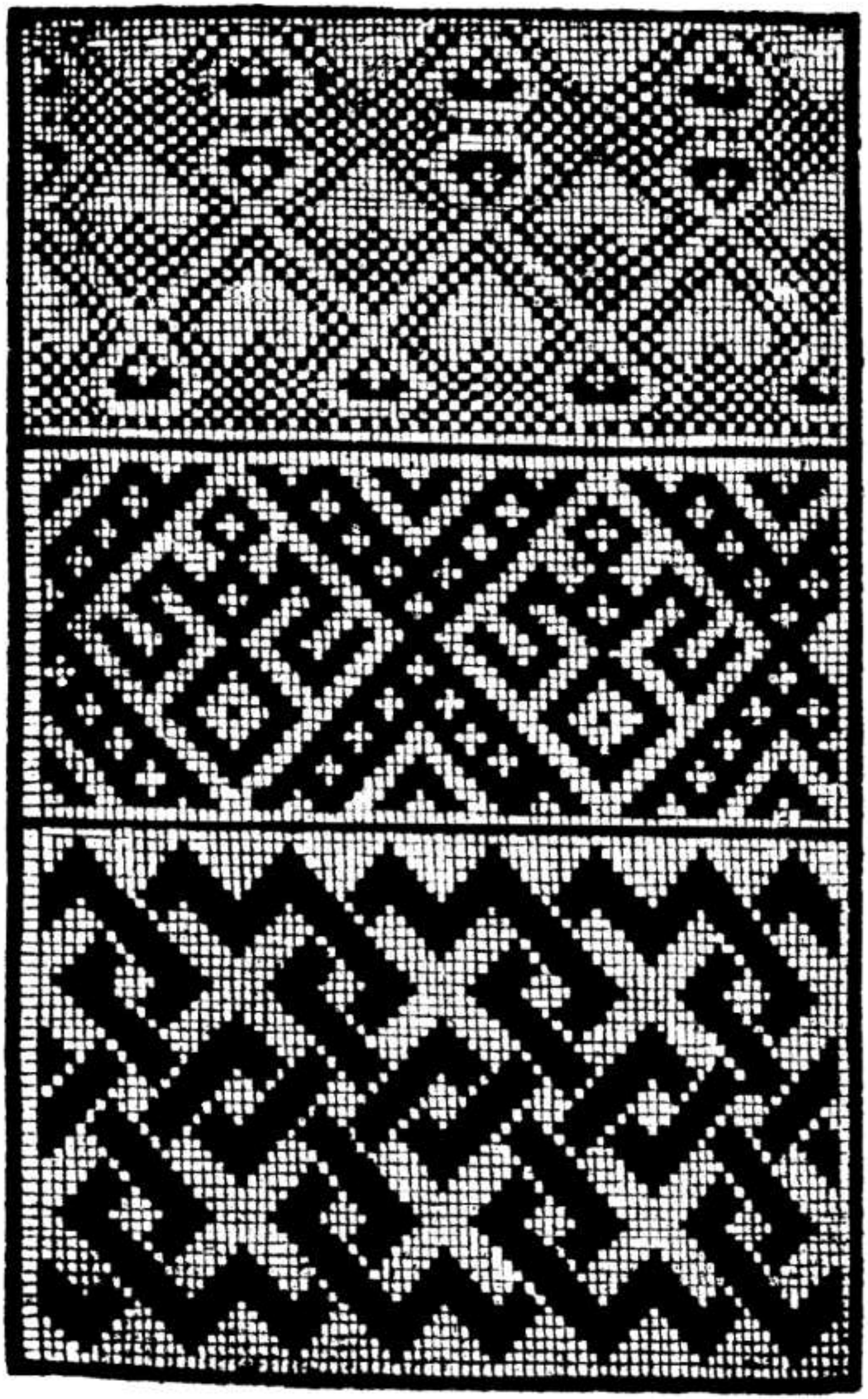


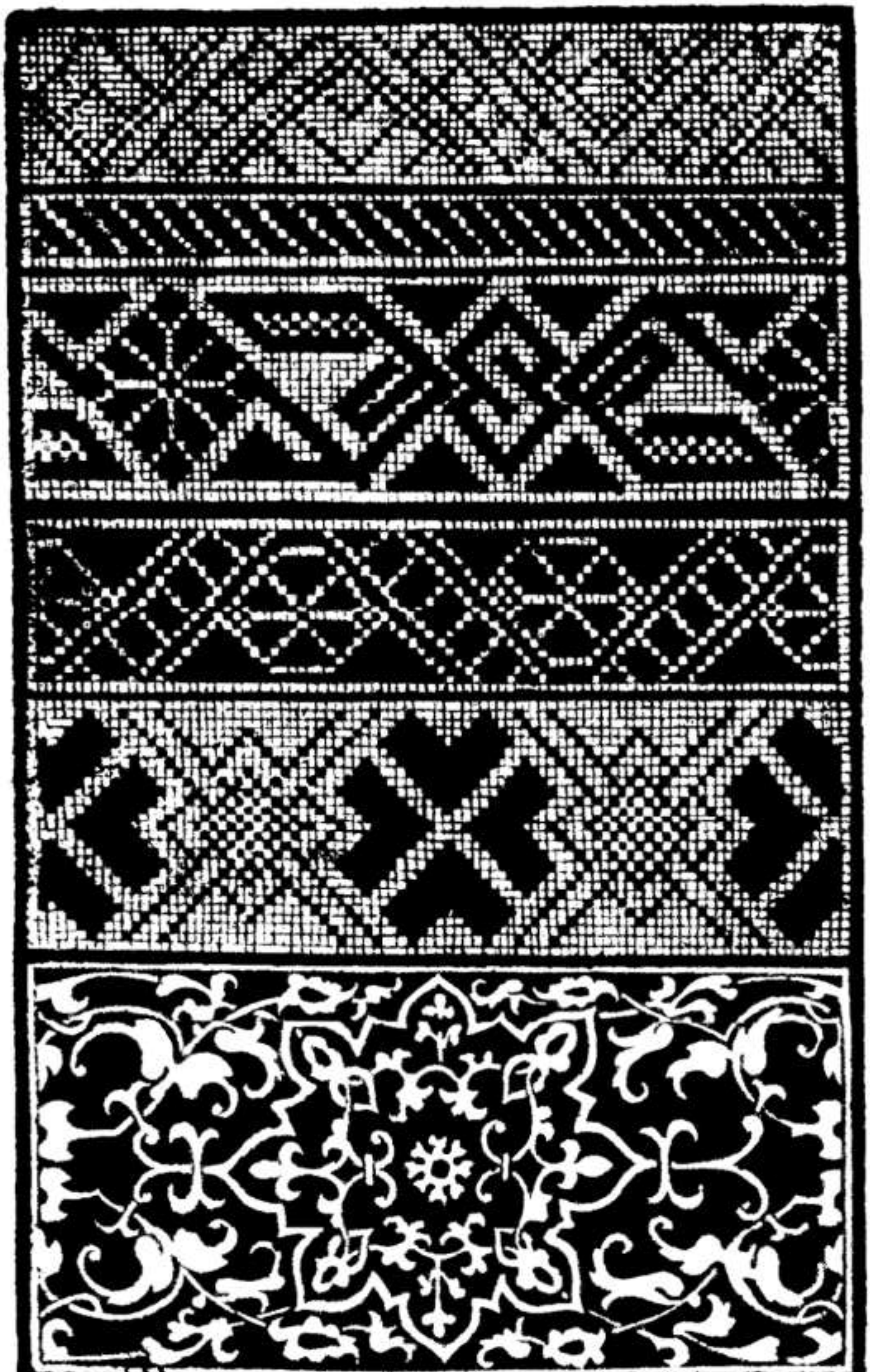


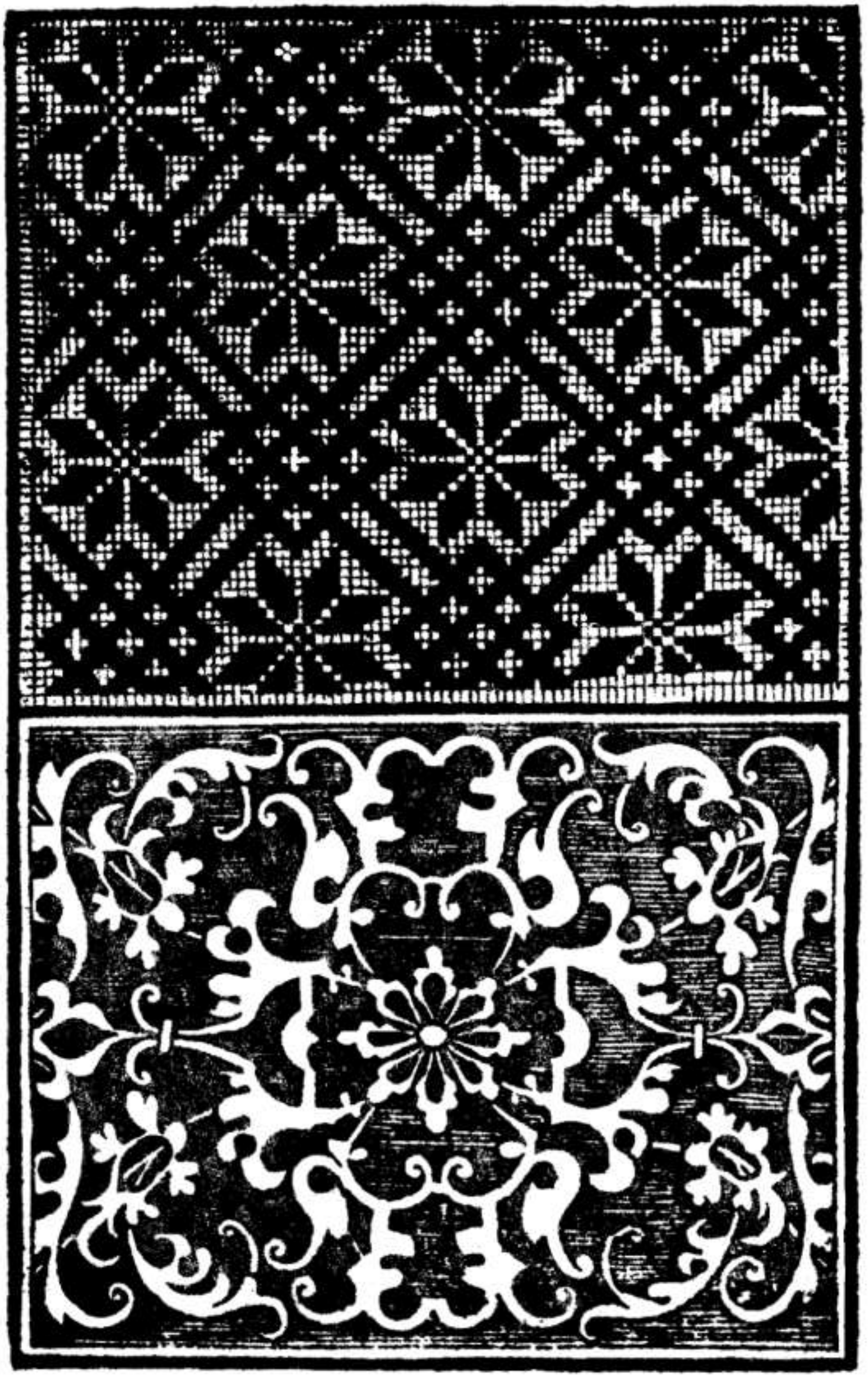


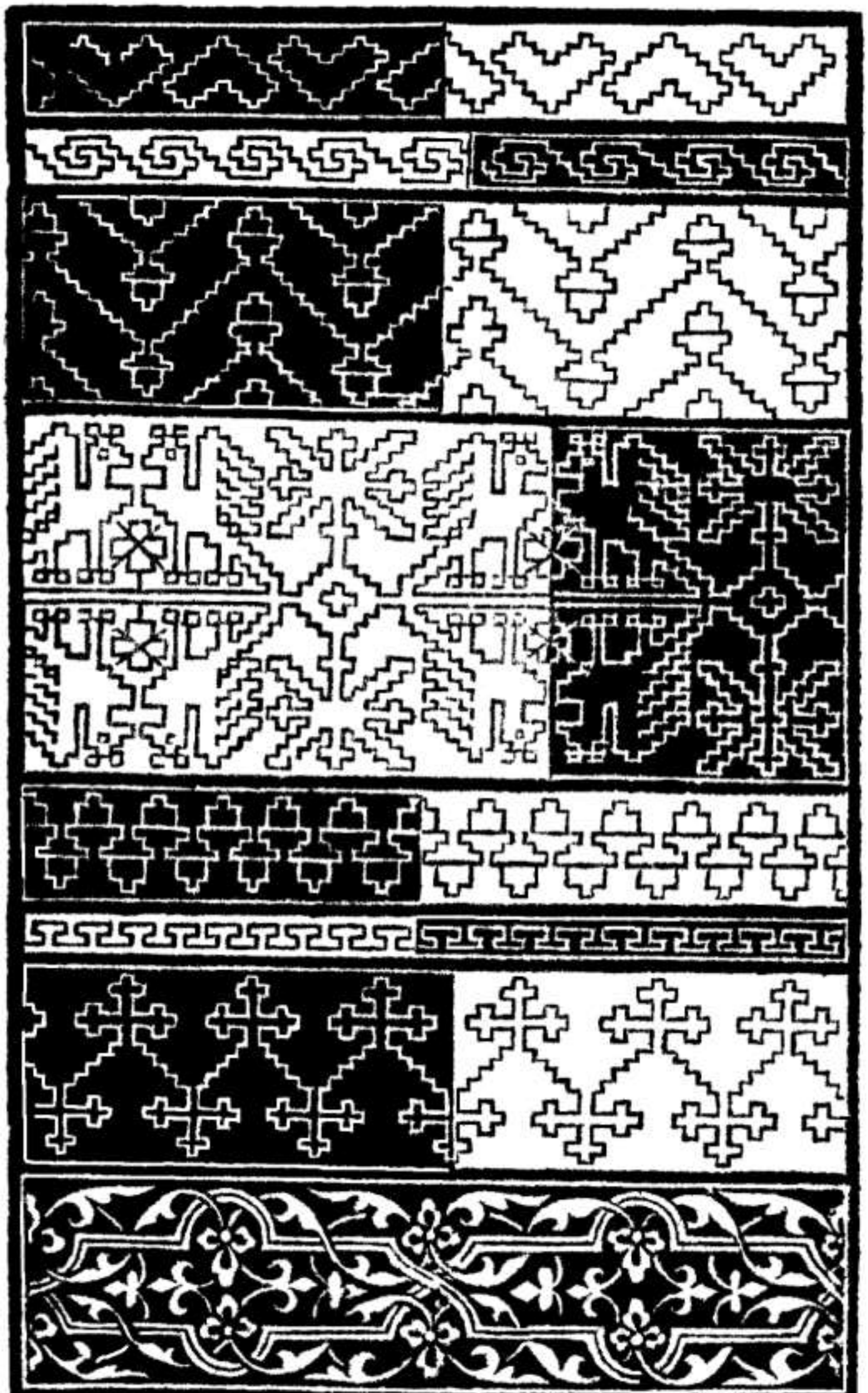


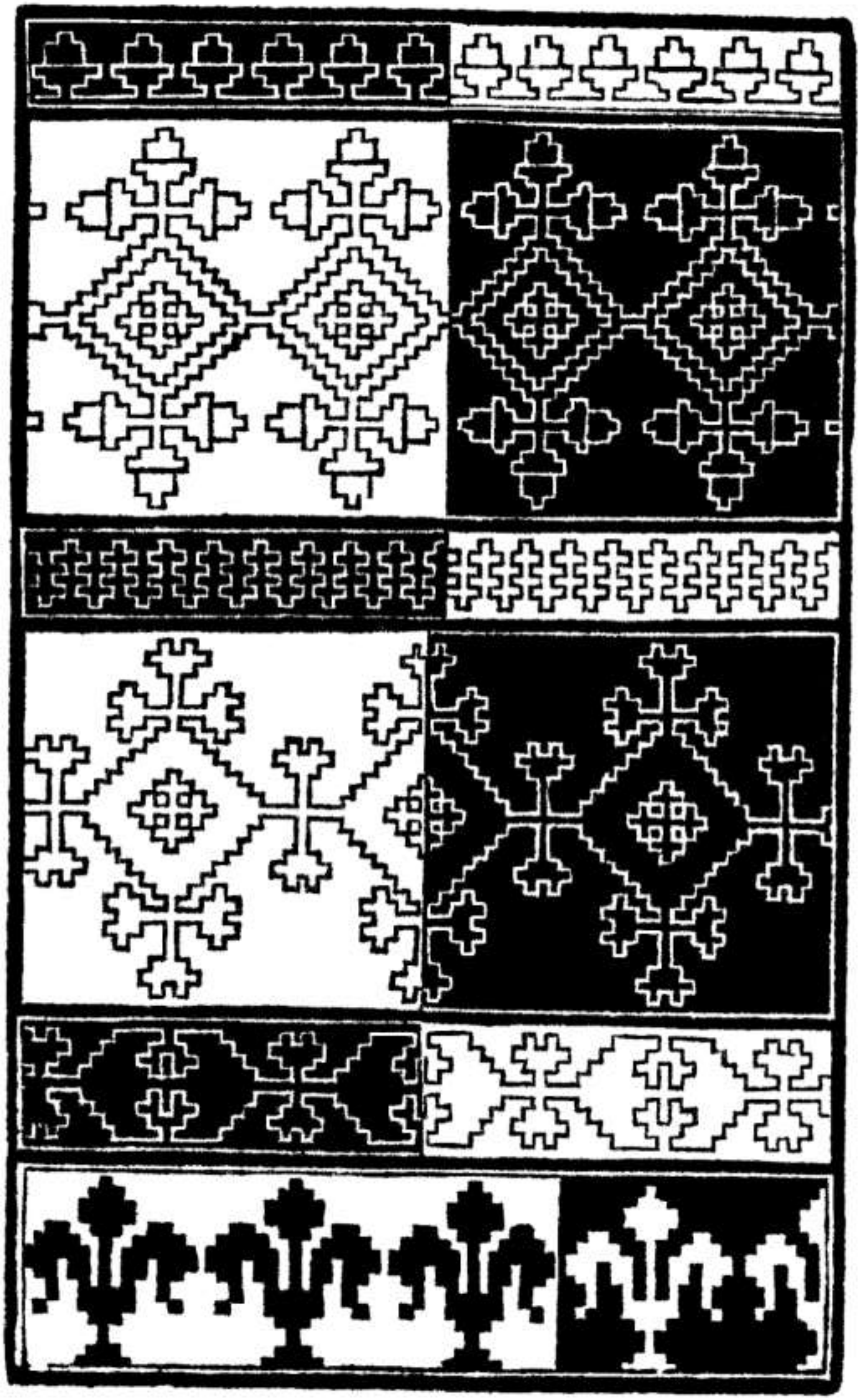


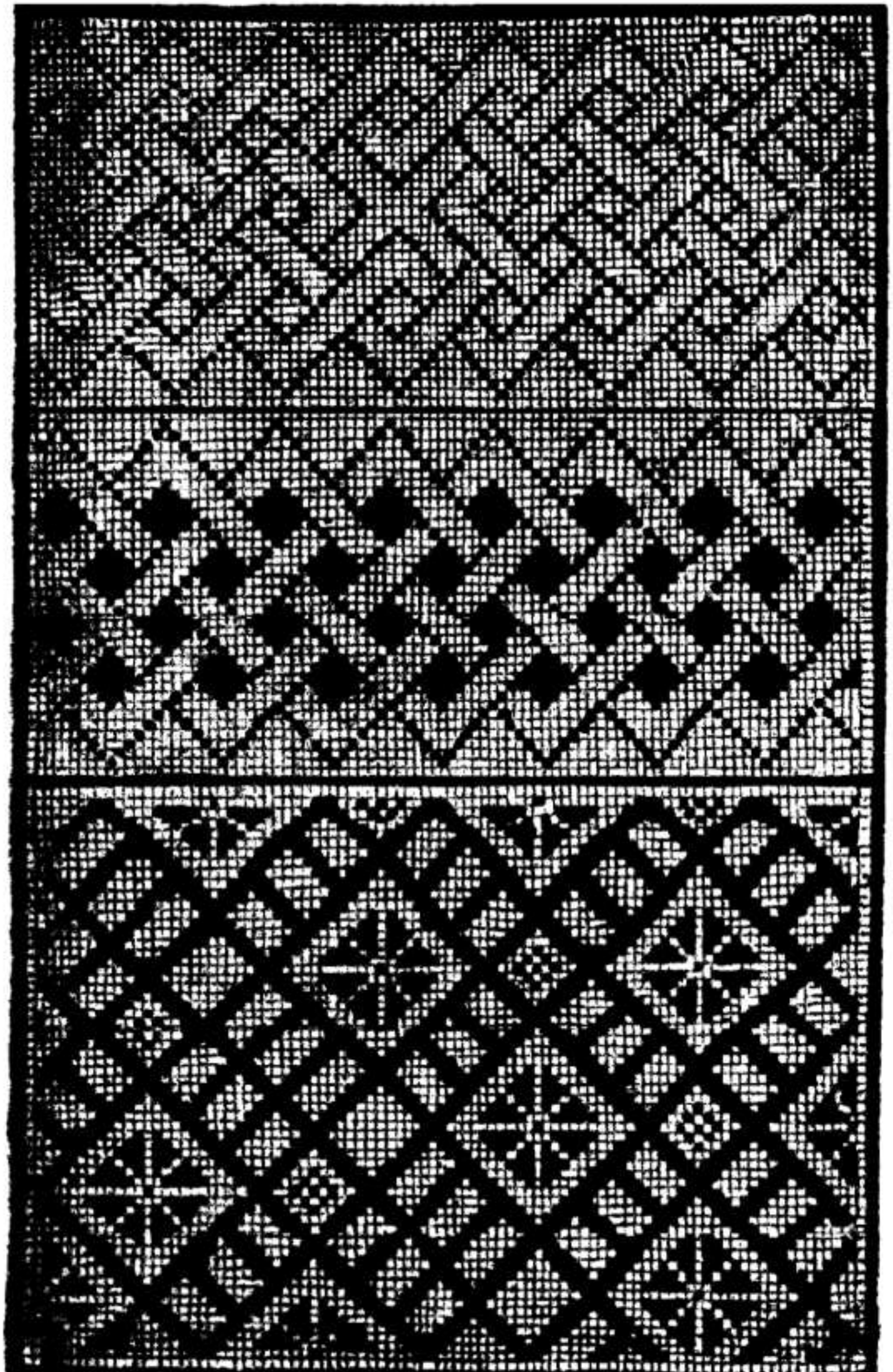


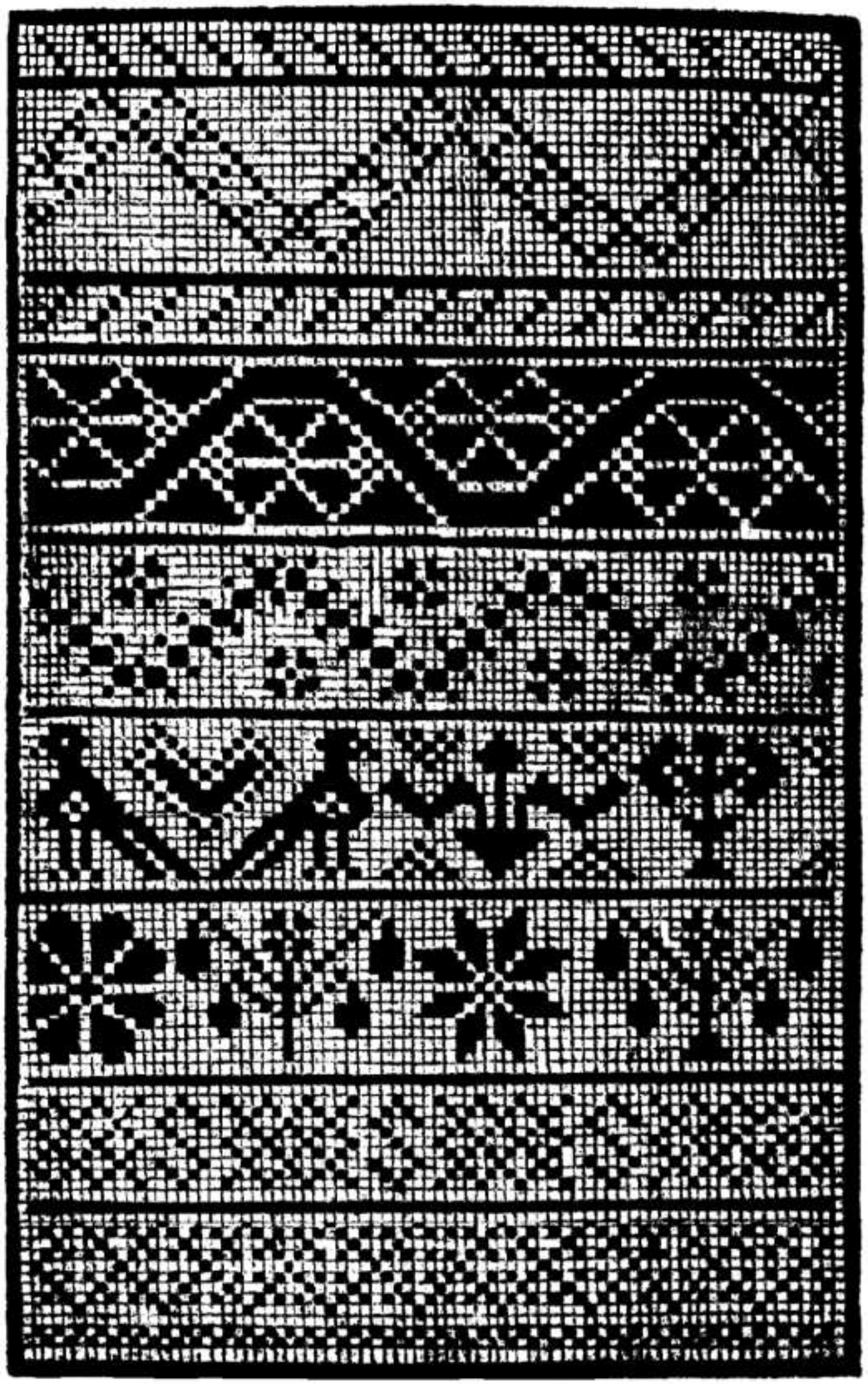


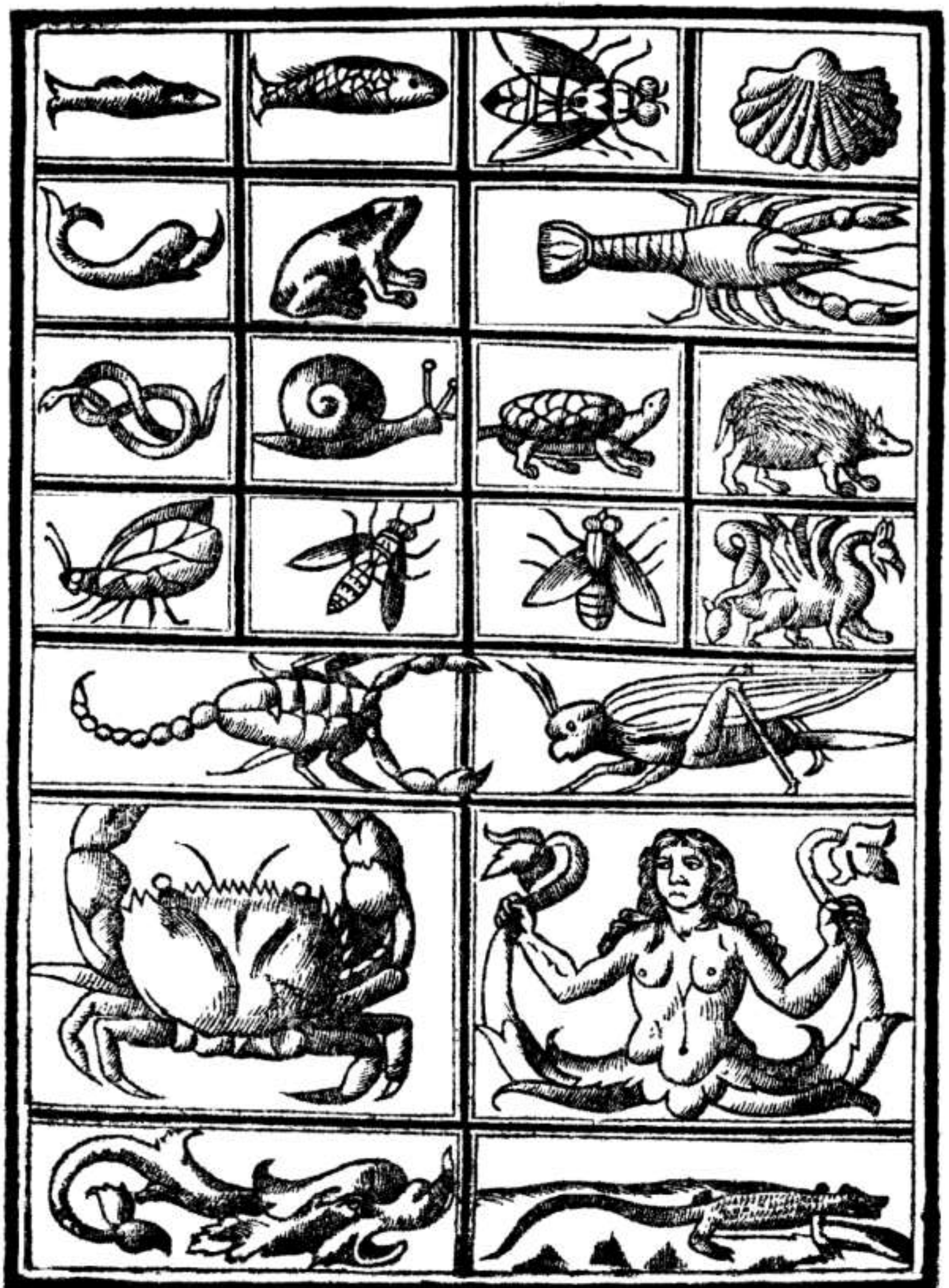


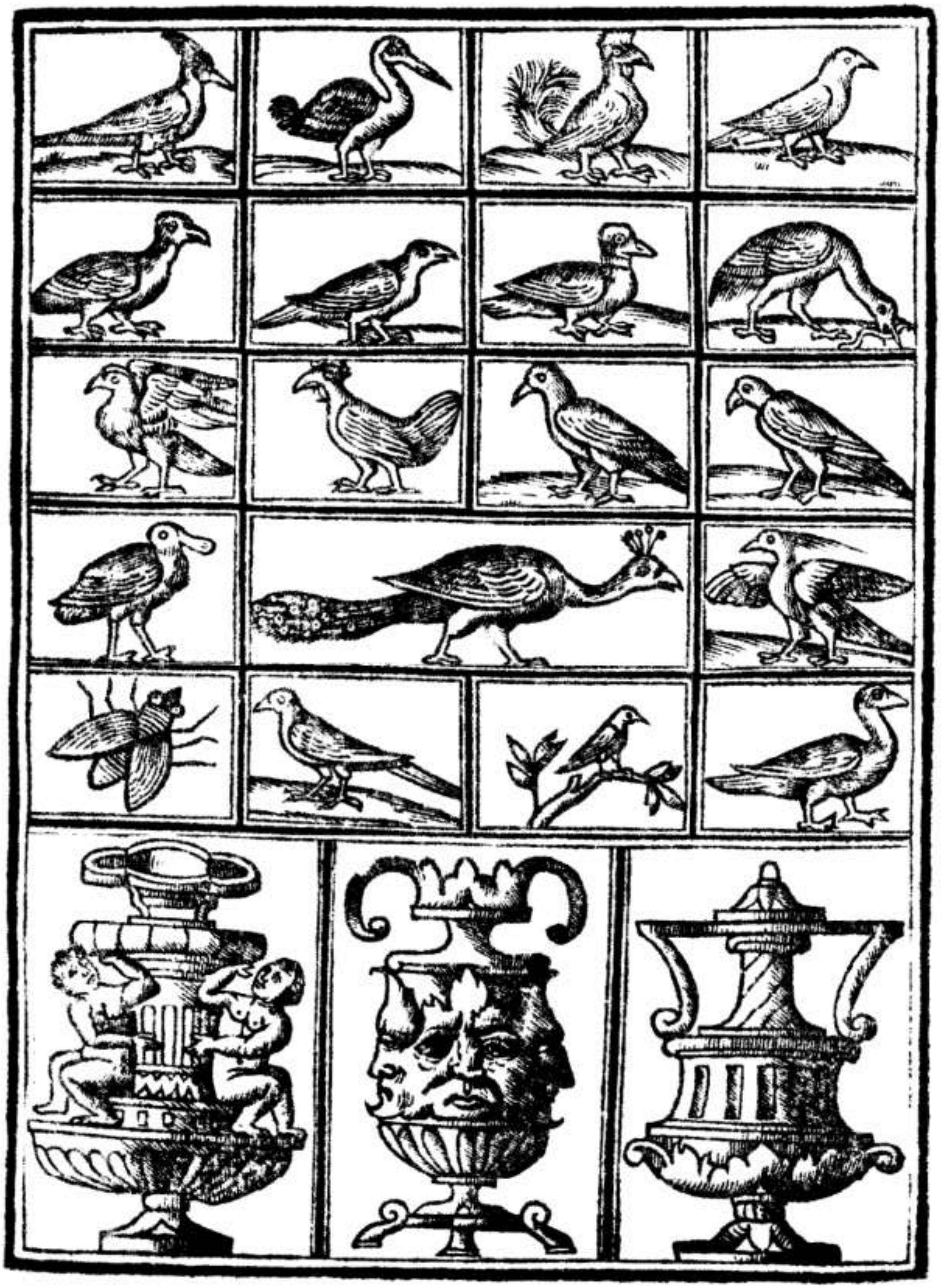


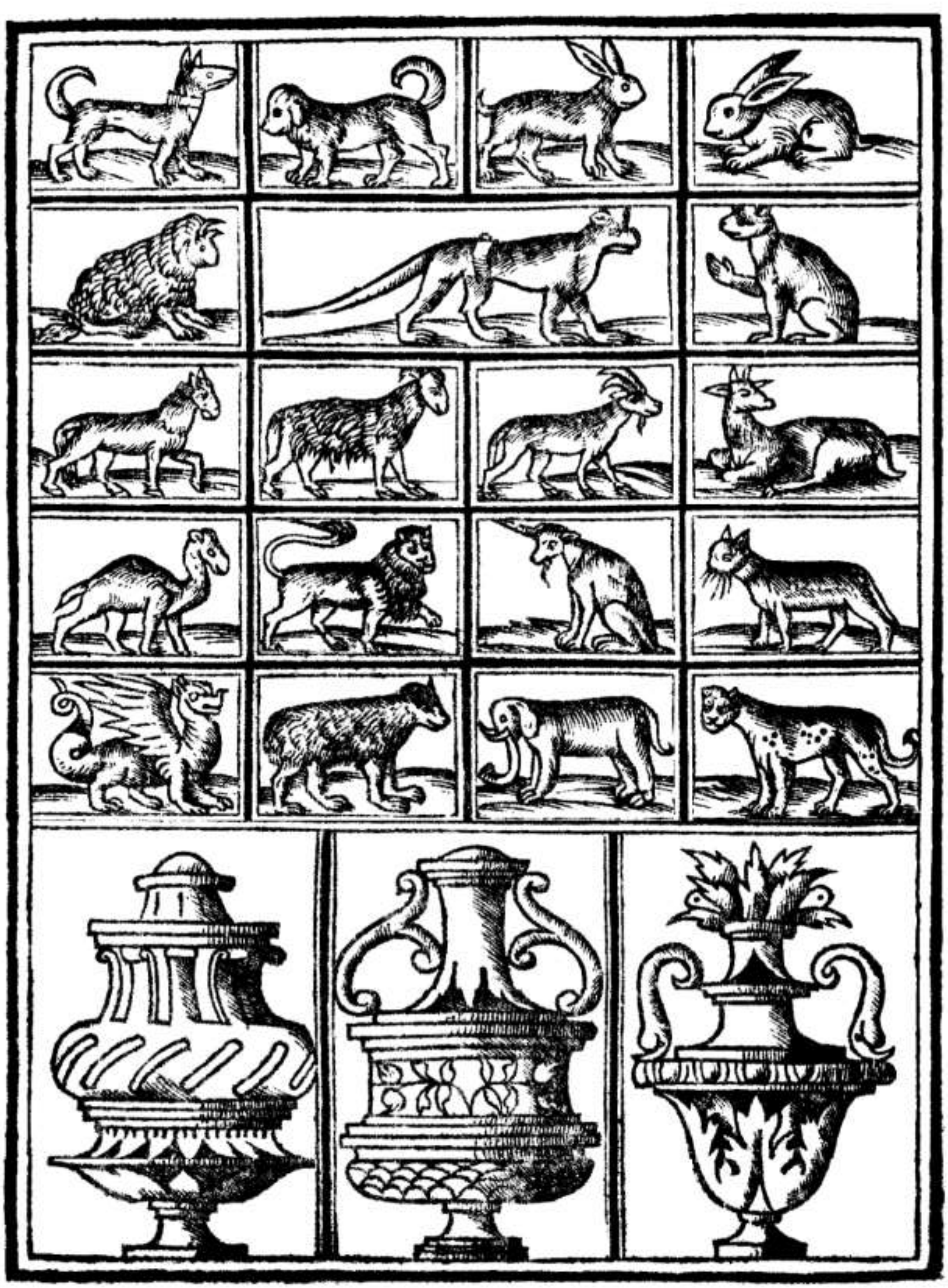


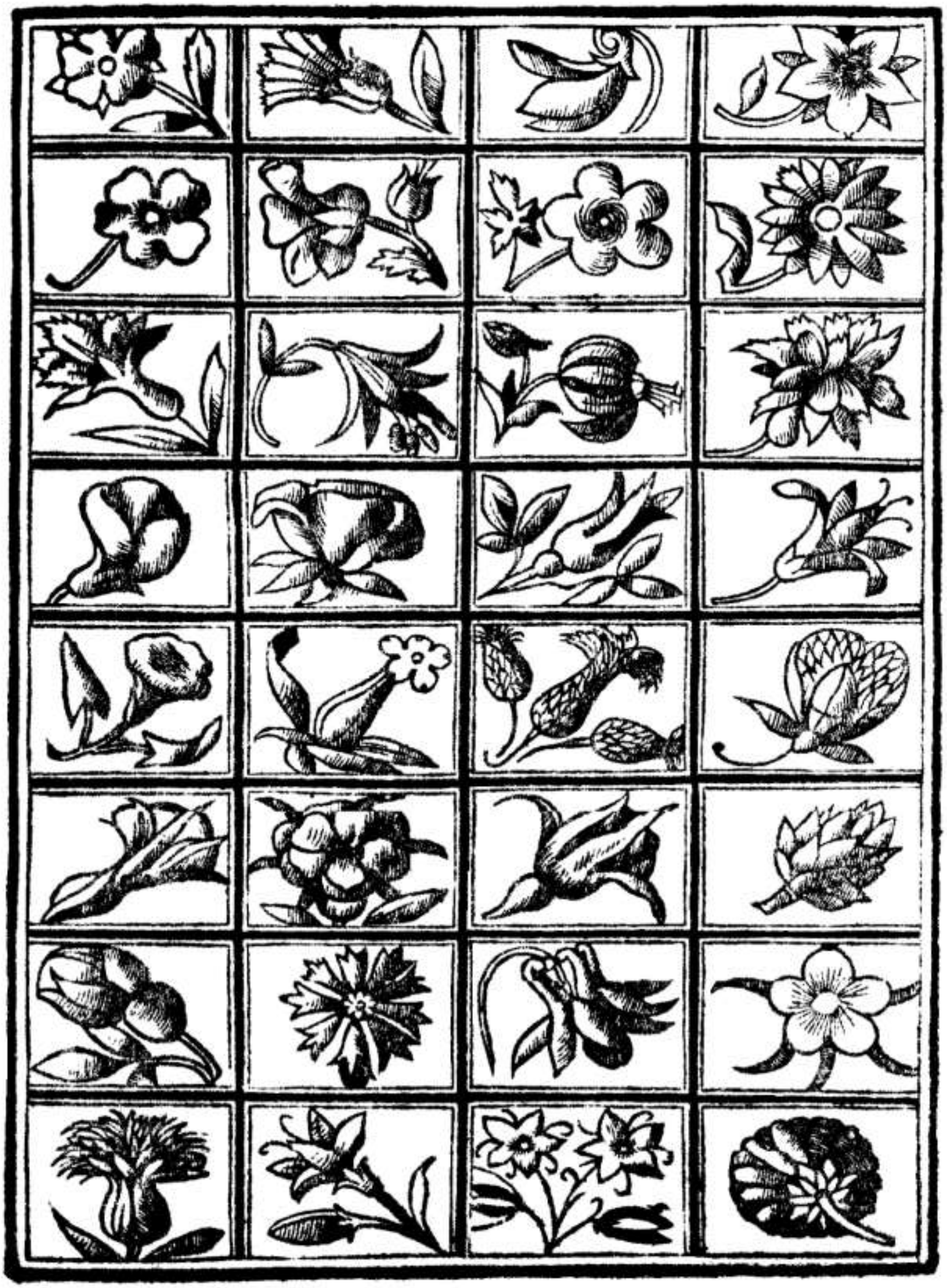


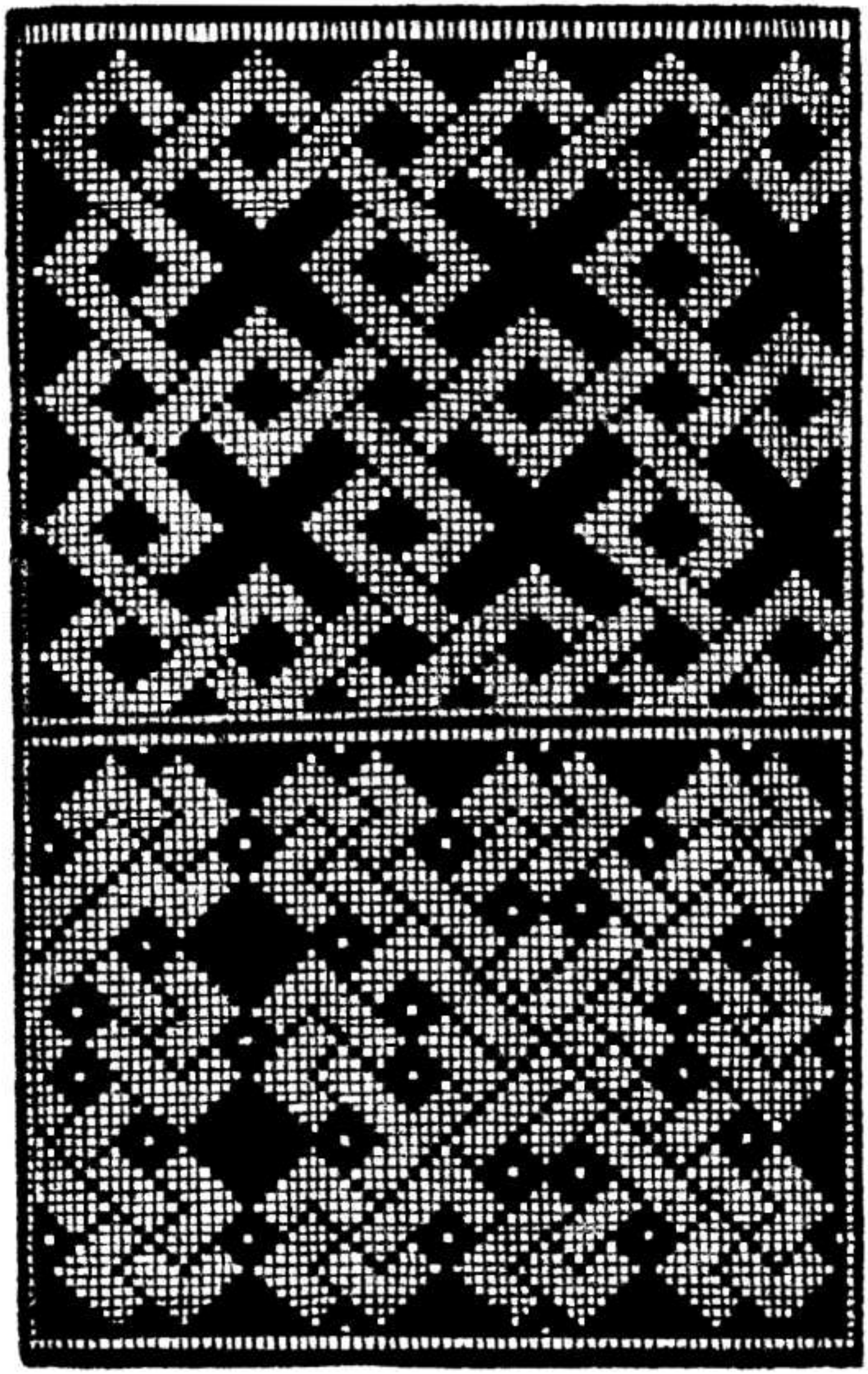


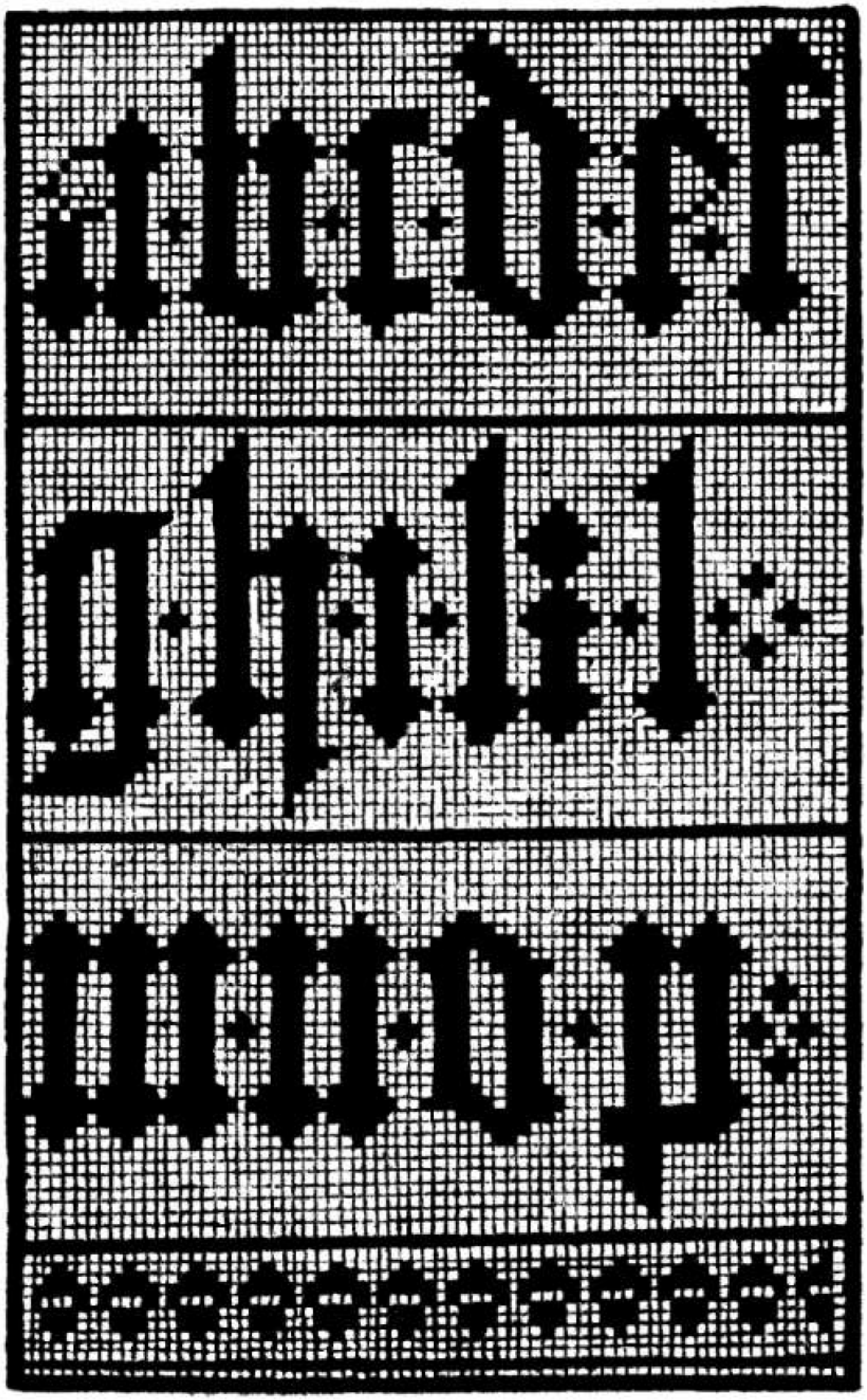


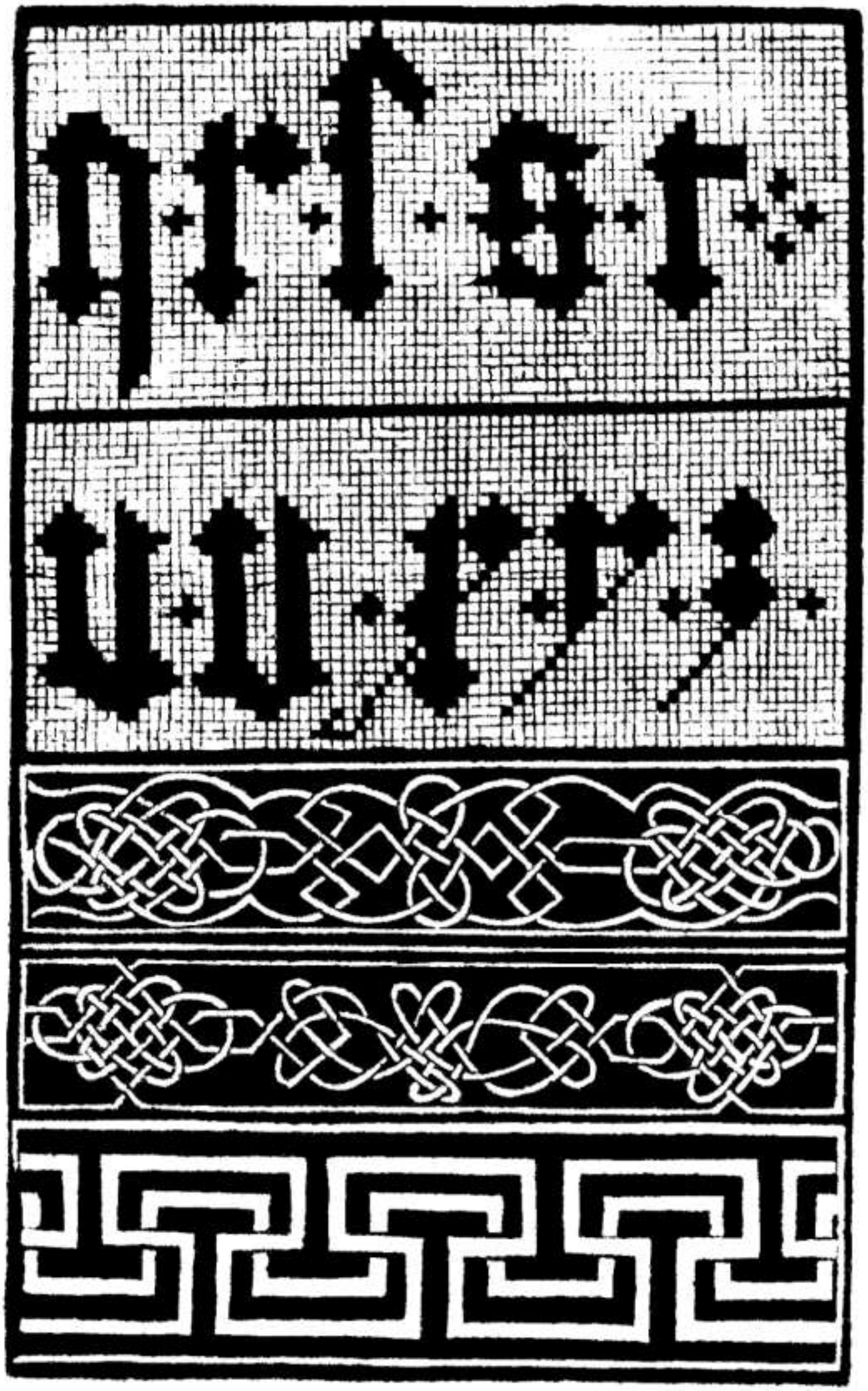


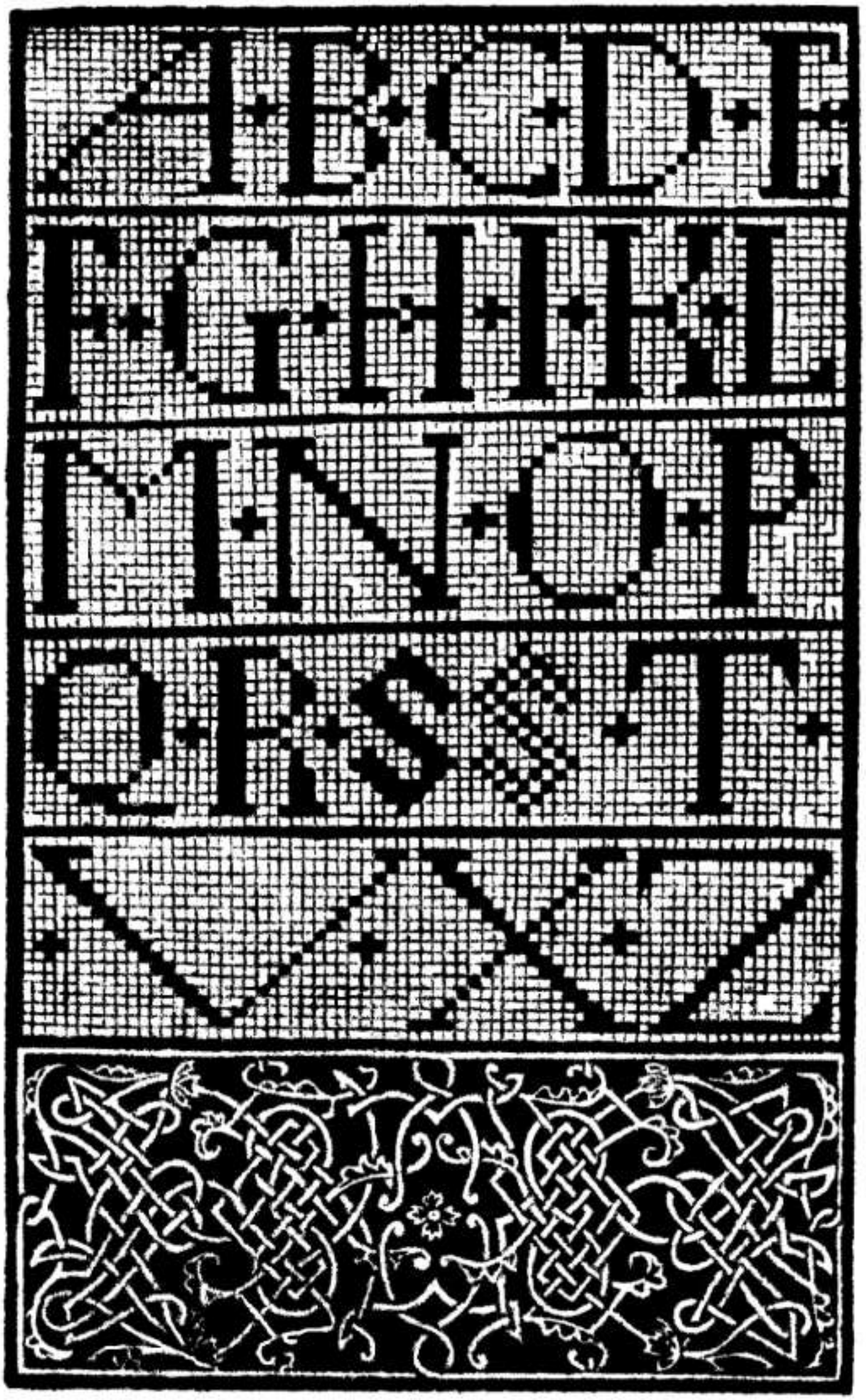


















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negia per Nicolo d'Aristotile detto
Zoppino. MDXXX.